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I. Introduction

1. The role of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Oceans and Seas and on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States was to serve as a preparatory meeting for the seventh session of the Commission on Sustainable Development and to facilitate the Commission in achieving tangible, action-oriented results on the issues of oceans and seas and the sustainable development of small island developing States. As agreed by the Working Group, the meeting produced two papers on the issue of oceans and seas. These papers were prepared by the Co-Chairmen of the Working Group on the basis of the discussions held during the meeting and comments made and proposals submitted by the participants on the preliminary drafts, but were not formally negotiated. These papers are:

(a) The possible elements for a draft decision (sect. II.A below), which could serve as a starting point for further deliberations and negotiations during the seventh session of the Commission. It is expected that this paper will be further studied by delegations and groups in the period between the meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group and the seventh session of the Commission with a view to formulating their positions in preparation for negotiations in the drafting groups during the seventh session;

(b) The Co-Chairmen's summary of discussions (sect. II.B below), which attempts to reflect the overall thrust of the discussion in the Working Group and the main positions stated by delegations, and to record, when necessary, alternative views and proposals. Written versions of several proposals made by delegations in the form in which they were presented are contained in the annex. This summary will not be further modified, and will be included as such in the report to the Commission as reference material on a given issue.

2. On the issue of the sustainable development of small island developing States, at the 7th meeting, on 5 March 1999, the Working Group agreed that the Co-Chairmen will continue to conduct informal consultations in preparation for the seventh session of the Commission on the basis of the work done during this meeting, and that they will issue a revised text of their proposal on the Commission's contribution at the twenty-second special session of the General Assembly on the basis of their original proposals, comments made during the meeting of the Working Group and subsequent proposals to be submitted by delegations.

II. Oceans and seas

A. Possible elements for a draft decision by the Commission on Sustainable Development at its seventh session

1. Introduction

3. The Working Group submits possible elements for a draft decision to the Commission on Sustainable Development at its seventh session, as set out below.

2. General considerations

4. The Commission could emphasize the fundamental fact that oceans and seas constitute the major part of the planet that supports life, drives the climate and hydrological cycle, and provides the vital resources to be used to eradicate poverty and to ensure food security, economic prosperity and well-being for present and future generations. The Commission could then reiterate the following general considerations:

(a) The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea[1] sets out the overall legal framework within which all activities in this field must be considered;

(b) Chapter 17 of Agenda 21[2] remains the fundamental programme of action for achieving sustainable development in respect to oceans and seas;

(c) The Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 (General Assembly resolution S-19/2, annex), adopted by the General Assembly at its nineteenth special session (especially its paragraph 36), identifies the needs for urgent action in respect to oceans and seas.

5. The Commission could stress that, as in other areas, action should be taken on the basis of the precautionary approach, the polluter-pays approach and the eco-system approach, and that, building on the outcome of the sixth session of the Commission, action should also take into account the best available scientific knowledge.

3. Major challenges at the national, regional and global levels

6. Following the 1998 International Year of the Ocean, the Commission could emphasize the importance of international cooperation, within the framework of the Convention and Agenda 21, in ensuring that biological diversity is conserved through integrated management, and that while respecting the sovereign rights and jurisdiction of coastal States, all States can benefit from the sustainable

use of the oceans and seas and their resources. The Commission could further emphasize the threats to these objectives from overexploitation of marine living resources and from pollution. In pursuing these goals, the Commission could recommend that particular priority be given to:

(a) The conservation, management and sustainable use of marine living resources;

(b) The prevention of pollution and degradation of the marine environment from land-based and other activities, including through the application of integrated coastal area management;

(c) The scientific understanding of the way in which the oceans and seas interact with the world climate system, particularly in comprehending and responding to such events as the El Niño phenomenon, and mitigating their impacts;

(d) Enhancing international cooperation in support of action at the national and regional levels in developing countries and those with economies in transition, including through the provision of financial and technical assistance and the transfer of environmentally sound technologies.

Capacity-building for action at the national level

7. In support of national action to implement the provisions of chapter 17 of Agenda 21, the Commission could invite the United Nations system and Governments, both in their bilateral relationships and in the multilateral development organizations in which they participate, to review their programmes to ensure that priority is given to building capacities relating to, *inter alia*, marine environment science, the administration of fisheries and shipping, the control of activities likely to pollute or degrade the marine environment, and cooperation and coordination with other States on marine environmental matters, as well as the ability to respond to natural disasters resulting from climatic variability, such as the El Niño phenomenon. It is also important that the agencies and programmes of the United Nations system and donors coordinate their actions.

Capacity-building for action at the regional level

8. The Commission could emphasize the importance of appropriate cooperation, within the relevant legal framework, for the protection and sustainable use of regional seas. In this context, it could support the need to strengthen the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) regional seas programme and to enhance cooperation with other regional seas organizations, in order to permit the sharing of experience, in line with the recent conclusions of the UNEP Governing Council at its twentieth session.

9. The Commission could further invite the United Nations system and Governments, both in their bilateral relationships and in the multilateral development organizations in which they participate, to review the priority given to building capacities needed to manage regional seas organizations, regional fisheries organizations and regional monitoring systems for climatic variability and other purposes, with the aim of ensuring that States can fulfil the commitments entered into in the framework of those organizations.

International agreements

10. The Commission could note that although significant progress has been made in developing global and regional agreements and programmes of action related to the protection and rational use of the seas, much more needs to be done to effectively implement these agreements and programmes. To promote this, the Commission could invite relevant intergovernmental bodies to review, in accordance with their respective mandates, the status of the implementation of international agreements and programmes of action in their areas of work as well as obstacles to more effective implementation, and could propose possible actions that could be taken to promote wider acceptance and implementation.

4. Areas of particular concern

Living marine resources

Sustainable fisheries

11. The Commission could recall the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) agreement to promote compliance with international conservation and management measures by fishing vessels on the high seas of 24 November 1993, the United Nations agreement for the implementation of the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the conservation and management of straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks of 4 August 1995, and the FAO code of conduct for responsible fisheries of 31 October 1995, and could emphasize the vital role of these instruments in safeguarding fish stocks that are being fished above the sustainable level. The Commission could urge States, unless they have already done so, to sign and ratify, or adopt them, and to effectively implement or apply them.

12. The Commission could welcome the recent approval by the FAO Committee on Fisheries of the international plans of action:

(a) To reduce the incidental catch of seabirds in long-line fisheries;

(b) For the conservation and management of sharks;

(c) For the management of fishing capacity.

13. The Commission could then urge the early formal adoption of these international plans of action and their effective implementation. In the case of the international plan of action for the management of fishing capacity, the Commission could also note its importance in relation to highly industrialized fleets, and invite:

(a) FAO to develop accessible methods for the measure of fishing capacity;

(b) States to undertake the evaluation of subsidies, economic incentives and other factors, and the reduction and progressive elimination of those that contribute, directly or indirectly, to excessive fishing capacity, as foreseen in that plan.

14. The Commission could further emphasize the need to improve the sustainable use and management of living marine resources, especially through intergovernmental regional fisheries organizations, and the importance of these organizations applying the principles contained in the compliance agreement and the United Nations fish stocks agreement, the code of conduct for responsible fisheries and the FAO international plans of action. In doing so, these organizations could be urged to apply sound scientific knowledge of the fish stocks and to ensure the involvement of civil society, especially representatives of fishers. These organizations and national Governments could further be urged to implement FAO technical recommendations to minimize waste and discards and to improve monitoring and enforcement.

15. To support this, the Commission could invite regional fisheries organizations, including those operating under the aegis of FAO, to provide information on progress made and on problems faced in applying these principles and recommendations. Such information could be included in the reports of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly.

16. The Commission could urge FAO to give high priority to its work on combating illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. The Commission could further invite the International Maritime Organization (IMO), in work to define the concept of "genuine link", as used in article 91 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (Nationality of ships), to include, in consultation with FAO and the United Nations Secretariat, consideration of the implications of the concept in relation to fisheries.

17. The Commission could note the contribution that could be made by schemes to improving the information available to consumers of fish both on the sustainability of its harvesting and on the economics of the trade, including, in the case of fish caught in waters under the jurisdiction of developing countries and then exported, on the economic returns to those countries and the implications for their subsistence fisheries. The Commission could then recommend further consideration by Governments and relevant intergovernmental bodies of such schemes.

Other marine living resources

18. The Commission could endorse the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) call to action, its renewed call to action, and its framework for action, and could urge implementation of complementary actions by States, intergovernmental organizations (in particular the Convention on Biological Diversity), non-governmental organizations and the private sector. The Commission could also ask the United Nations system to provide information on progress in implementing ICRI objectives at the conclusion of the period of the current framework for action in 2003.

19. The Commission could also invite Governments and regional seas organizations to consider the contribution that a global representative system of marine protected areas could make to the sustainable management of the oceans and seas, and could encourage them to continue the development of such a system by appropriate designations in their maritime areas within the framework of the Convention on the Law of the Sea and on a basis consistent with the programme of work under the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Jakarta Mandate.

Land-based activities

20. The Commission could express its grave concern at the slow rate of progress in many aspects of the implementation of the Global Programme of Action on the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (A/51/116, annex II). In this context, the Commission could welcome the recent decision of the UNEP Governing Council on the implementation of the Programme of Action, especially the call for the Executive Director of UNEP to expeditiously complete the establishment of the Hague coordination office. The Commission could emphasize the importance of this implementation for the prevention of the pollution and degradation of the marine environment.

21. In line with the 1995 Washington Declaration on Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based

Activities (A/51/116, annex I, appendix II), the Commission could further emphasize the essential needs to:

(a) Cooperate to build capacities and mobilize resources for the development and implementation of national action programmes, in particular for developing countries and those with economies in transition;

(b) Urge national and international institutions and the private sector, bilateral donors and multilateral funding agencies to accord priority to projects within national and regional programmes to implement the Programme of Action and to encourage the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to support these projects;

(c) Establish a clearing house mechanism to provide decision makers in all States with direct access to relevant sources of information, practical experience and scientific and technical expertise, and to facilitate effective scientific, technical and financial cooperation as well as capacity-building.

22. The Commission could also stress:

(a) The benefits of preparing the necessary national and local plans within a framework of integrated coastal area management;

(b) The value of further work by relevant international organizations, in conjunction with relevant regional seas organizations, in promoting such management;

(c) The importance of supporting initiatives at the regional level to develop agreements, arrangements or plans of action on the protection of the marine environment from land-based activities.

23. The Commission could welcome the activities in progress under the aegis of UNEP on persistent organic pollutants (POPs).

24. The Commission could reiterate the appeal to the governing bodies of the relevant United Nations agencies and programmes to review their role and contribution to the implementation of the Programme of Action within their respective mandates, as recommended by the General Assembly in its resolution 51/189. The Commission could further invite those organizations to provide information on progress in this regard which could, *inter alia*, be included in the reports of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly.

25. The Commission could welcome the agreement by the recent UNEP Governing Council to explore the feasibility for UNEP to convene by 2000 a global conference to address sewage as a major land-based source of pollution affecting human and ecosystem health. In this context, the Commission could encourage the establishment of links between this conference and both the first intergovernmental review of the Programme of Action planned for 2001 and the ministerial conference on the sustainable management of freshwater to be held in the Netherlands in 2000.

Marine science

26. The Commission could emphasize that scientific understanding of the marine environment, including marine living resources, is fundamental to sound decision-making. Among other aspects of the global environment, this applies to the way in which the interaction between atmospheric and oceanic systems is changing as a result of climate change (for example, the experience with the 1997–1998 El Niño phenomenon). The Commission could therefore:

(a) Welcome the recently declared intention of IMO, serving as the administrative secretariat for the Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Protection (GESAMP), and working in partnership with other participating organizations, to improve the effectiveness and inclusiveness of GESAMP, as recommended by the Commission in its decision 4/15, in which it called for a review of the Group's terms of reference, composition and methods of work, as a means of enhancing its status as a source of independent, scientific advice on oceans and coastal issues; the Commission could further recommend exploring the possibility of establishing means for GESAMP to interact with scientific representatives of Governments;

(b) Invite the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to consider whether the support available for building scientific capacities needed for effective management of the marine environment in developing countries, particularly in the least developed countries, could be focused more effectively or extended; recalling its decision 6/3 concerning the need for enhanced science communication processes, the Commission could encourage a contribution from the forthcoming UNESCO World Science Congress on this question;

(c) Invite all intergovernmental agencies concerned with aspects of the oceans to consider whether their programmes of work make sufficient allowance for considerations of the potential impact of increased climate variability, and to review through the various coordination arrangements what more needs to be done to ensure adequate understanding of the implications of such matters as the El Niño phenomenon;

(d) Stress the value both of the collection of reliable oceanographic data through such systems as the Global

Ocean Observing System, and of periodic comprehensive scientific assessments of international waters, such as the Global International Waters Assessment, including assessments of the impact of physical and chemical changes on the health, distribution and productivity of living marine resources.

27. The Commission could note the impact throughout the world of the El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO), one of the clearest examples of a linkage between oceans and the atmosphere, and its social and economic consequences, particularly for developing countries. The Commission could welcome the intergovernmental expert meeting held at Guayaquil, Ecuador, in November 1998, the intergovernmental meeting to be held at Lima in September 1999 and the meeting on desertification and the El Niño phenomenon to be held at La Serena, Chile, in October 1999. The Commission could then:

(a) Request the United Nations Secretariat to gather information on all aspects of the impact of ENSO, through national reports on the implementation of Agenda 21, and to provide this information to the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on ENSO, in order to contribute to the development of the internationally concerted and comprehensive strategy towards the prevention, mitigation and rehabilitation of the damage caused by ENSO;

(b) Decide to consider the impacts of ENSO as part of its examination of the integrated planning and management of land resources at its eighth session;

(c) Register the importance of including the ENSO issue in the next quinquennial comprehensive review of Agenda 21, and request the Division for Sustainable Development to provide a comprehensive report on which decisions on including the ENSO issue could be based.

28. To improve the scientific knowledge of fish stocks, the Commission could invite regional fisheries organizations to consider strengthening catch surveiliance, using scientific peer review systems to improve the scientific quality of fish stock assessments, exchanging information on assessment techniques with each other and generally enhancing transparency. FAO could be invited to assist and support this process.

Other marine pollution

29. The Commission could recommend that:

(a) Since it is the responsibility of flag States to regulate their fleets and ensure the quality of their registers, flag States be encouraged to accede to or ratify and implement the relevant international instruments; the Commission could further encourage IMO to support this approach through the work of its Subcommittee on Flag State Implementation;

(b) The export of wastes and other matter for the purpose of dumping at sea be stopped; the Commission could further recommend that States be encouraged to become Parties to and implement the 1996 Protocol to the Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter of 1972;[3]

(c) The international community be encouraged to cooperate fully in the various efforts, at the national, regional and global levels, for the prevention of the spread of harmful aquatic organisms through ships' ballast water;

(d) The programme for the development within the framework of IMO of controls on harmful anti-fouling paints used on ships be carried out in accordance with the timetable foreseen;

(e) The International Seabed Authority complete its proposals to protect the marine environment from the impact of seabed exploration and mining;

(f) States ratify annex VI to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL 73/78) on the control of air pollution from shipping.[4]

30. The Commission, taking into account its decision 4/15, and welcoming the outcome of the international expert meeting on environmental practices in offshore oil and gas activities, sponsored by Brazil and the Netherlands and held at Noordwijk, the Netherlands, in 1997, could recommend that:

(a) The primary focus of action on the environmental aspects of offshore oil and gas operations continue to be at the national, subregional and regional levels;

(b) In support of such action, there is a need to share information on the development and application of satisfactory environmental management systems, aimed at achieving national, subregional and regional environmental goals;

(c) To promote the sharing of that information, to raise awareness and to provide early warning of potential new threats to the marine environment, further initiatives be undertaken, involving Governments, international organizations, operators and major groups.

5. International coordination and cooperation

31. The Commission could urge relevant institutions, whether national, regional or global, to enhance

collaboration with each other, taking into account their respective mandates, with a view to promoting coordinated approaches, avoiding duplication of effort, enhancing effective functioning of existing organizations, and ensuring better access to information and broadening its dissemination.

32. The Commission could also note that oceans and seas present a special case as regards the need for international coordination and cooperation. The Commission could therefore recommend that, building on existing arrangements, a more integrated approach is required to all legal, economic, social and environmental aspects of the oceans and seas, both at intergovernmental and inter-agency levels. To achieve this goal, the Commission could:

(a) Invite the Secretary-General to undertake measures aimed at ensuring more effective collaboration between relevant parts of the United Nations Secretariat in support of work on oceans and seas;

(b) Further invite the Secretary-General to complement his annual reports to the General Assembly with suggestions on initiatives that could be undertaken in order to improve coordination and achieve better integration, and to submit these reports well in advance of the debate in the Assembly;

(c) Invite the Secretary-General, working in cooperation with the executive heads of relevant organizations of the United Nations system, to undertake measures aimed at improving the effectiveness of the work of the ACC Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas, including through making the work of the Subcommittee more transparent and responsive to member States, for example by organizing regular briefings on the Subcommittee's activities;

(d) Recommend that the General Assembly, bearing in mind the importance of utilizing the existing framework to the maximum extent possible, give consideration to ways and means of enhancing the effectiveness of its annual debate on oceans and the law of the sea.

33. In the context of paragraph 30 (d) above, a number of proposals were made by delegations, which are contained in the annex.

B. Co-Chairmen's summary of discussions

1. Introduction

34. The debate on oceans and seas was based on the report of the Secretary-General on oceans and seas (E/CN.17/1999/4) in the context of chapter 17 of Agenda 21. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea provided the overall legal framework, while Agenda 21 provided the policy framework of the discussions under this theme. The 1998 International Year of the Oceans helped to raise international awareness of the issues.

35. Many delegations pointed out that the seventh session of the Commission should build upon the results and goals so far achieved. It was noted that particular attention should be paid to Commission decision 4/15 and paragraph 36 of the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, adopted by the General Assembly at its nineteenth special session.

36. The main starting points of the discussions included the recognition of the right of countries to manage and exploit sustainably their marine resources and of the need to enhance their capacities in this regard, as well as of the need to conserve actively marine ecosystem functions, species and habitats. Many delegations noted that marine resources constitute a critical source of food security as well as the livelihood for many coastal and island developing States. Sustainable management of oceans and seas, as well as of adjacent coastal areas, has important economic and social implications, particularly related to the issue of poverty reduction.

37. Many delegations from developing and developed countries and countries with economies in transition shared information on their policies, strategies and activities in their countries in protecting and managing oceans and their living resources. Recent meetings that provided useful contributions or have direct relevance to the debate were mentioned, including an international expert meeting on environmental practices in offshore oil and gas activities, co-sponsored by Brazil and the Netherlands and held at Noordwijk, the Netherlands, in 1997; the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation oceans conference held in Hawaii in October 1998; an intergovernmental meeting of experts on El Niño held at Guayaquil, Ecuador, in November 1998; an international tropical marine ecosystems management symposium held at Townsville, Australia, in November 1998; a conference on cooperation for the development and protection of the coastal and marine environment in sub-Saharan Africa, sponsored by the Advisory Committee on Protection of the Sea, UNEP and the South African Government, held at Cape Town in December 1998; and the Second London Oceans Workshop, sponsored by Brazil and the United Kingdom in December 1998. Also mentioned were the work of the Independent World Commission on Oceans and the fourth session of the ongoing multilateral high-level consultations on highly migratory fish stocks

in the Central and Western Pacific, held in Hawaii in February 1999.

2. Major challenges at the national, regional and international levels

38. Main priority issues raised by the Working Group related to the following: (a) the conservation and management of marine living resources, including sustainable fisheries; (b) the prevention of the pollution and degradation of the marine environment from land-based activities; (c) the scientific understanding of the way in which the oceans and seas interact with the world climate system; and (d) enhancing international cooperation and coordination.

Capacity-building for action at the national and regional levels

39. Many delegations noted that capacity-building was central to all actions to deal with issues related to oceans and seas. They emphasized the need to build capacities at both the national and regional levels to deliver actions in an integrated and holistic manner. Improving scientific assessments of oceans was essential in this regard, building on the work and experience of scientists from all countries and relevant organizations.

40. Many delegations stressed the need for financial resources and technology transfer in achieving goals agreed in chapter 17 of Agenda 21.

41. Many delegations stressed the importance of taking practical steps at the regional level, and thus the need for enhancing regional collaboration on the marine environment, particularly through the UNEP regional seas programme and the corresponding agreements in other regions to integrate marine environment policies among States. The need to revitalize the regional seas programme was emphasized in this regard. A mention was also made that regional fisheries management organizations and regional seas environmental protection organizations should be called on to cooperate in the development of integrated fisheries management and environmental protection, conservation and management, based on an eco-system approach. Some delegations emphasized the creation or strengthening of networks at the regional level to exchange and disseminate scientific information related to oceans.

International agreements

42. Several delegations called for urgent ratification and full implementation of such international agreements as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the United Nations fish stocks agreement and the FAO compliance agreement, the Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter and its 1996 Protocol, and the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL 73/78). Also underlined was the importance of implementing the FAO international plans of action for the management of fishing capacity, shark fisheries, and incidental catch of seabirds in longline fisheries, and applying the FAO code of conduct for responsible fisheries. These were recommended to be fully taken into account in formulating and adopting national action plans.

3. Areas of concern

Marine living resources

43. Many delegations noted that different fishing patterns have different impacts on the world's regional fish stocks (examples given included commercial practices versus subsistence fishing in developing countries, and long distance fisheries versus coastal fisheries). The growing problem was mentioned, for example, of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, particularly by vessels, often flying flags of convenience, that encroach on the fisheries resources of coastal and island developing States as well as of the high seas. Many delegations identified the urgent need to eradicate such practices, which often lead to a significant loss of revenue and resources of those countries and affect small-scale subsistence fisheries. They called for the enhancement of the surveillance and control capacities of coastal and island developing States. Assistance was also needed for those countries to control distant fishing fleets operating under access agreements. The need for support for further work on the technical aspects of this issue was mentioned in this regard. Some delegations noted that illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing practices might be best dealt with in appropriate regional fisheries management bodies.

44. Many delegations mentioned the urgent need for measures and actions to reduce and eliminate wasteful fishing practices. In this regard, they called for the bringing into force and the implementation of the FAO compliance agreement and the international plans of action for the management of fishing capacity, shark fisheries, and incidental catch of seabirds in longline fisheries, adopted by the FAO Committee on Fisheries in February 1999, and intended to bring fishing capacity worldwide to an optimum level and to conserve and manage shark fisheries and seabird populations. In addition, some delegations urged the adoption of bycatch reduction plans at the national, regional

and global levels to minimize bycatch, and to the extent that bycatch cannot be avoided, to minimize bycatch mortality. Such plans should include restrictions on indiscriminate or harmful fishing gear and practices that contribute to elevated bycatch or marine habitat degradation.

45. Many delegations linked calls to reduce global fishing capacity with the evaluation of possible negative impact of subsidies, and the reduction and progressive elimination of subsidies and other economic and fiscal incentives that in their view directly or indirectly promote overcapitalization. Many other delegations felt that this was particularly applicable to industrialized fleets. A view was expressed, however, that in a situation where there is a system for licensing fishing vessels and the number of vessels is controlled, there were no grounds for the claim that subsidies constituted a cause of excessive fishing.

46. Some delegations touched on the need for consumers to be better informed, including through market incentives, such as eco-labelling of fish and fish products. Other delegations cautioned that in ongoing discussions regarding eco-labelling, potential negative impacts of these measures on market access should be properly taken into account. Other delegations suggested that this matter should be left to be dealt with at the national level. Many delegations stated that the concept of eco-labelling and related issues are still under consideration at the Committee on Trade and Environment of the World Trade Organization; in any case, such measures should not constitute barriers to trade. Some other delegations referred to the work of FAO in this respect.

47. Many delegations mentioned that many countries need assistance in sound scientific observation of their fish stocks. A suggestion was made for regional fisheries cooperation, in particular through regional scientific peer review of information on the state of fish stocks and catches.

Land-based activities

48. There was a general agreement that some progress has been achieved with the adoption of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities but that urgent attention was needed for its effective implementation at the regional and national levels. Some delegations stressed the importance of resuscitating UNEP's catalytic role in the development of a clearinghouse mechanism which would promote action at the national and regional levels.

49. Many delegations emphasized the lack of financial resources as the major obstacle in achieving the objectives of the Programme of Action. Unless assistance was provided, in particular to developing countries, it would be difficult for them to implement the Programme of Action.

50. Some delegations referred to the identification of steps to address sewage problems as among the most important challenges. Also noted was the necessary link between Commission work related to sewage aspects of freshwater and the Programme of Action.

Marine science and climate change

51. Several delegations referred to the El Niño/La Niña phenomena as having global repercussions. Long-term strategy to tackle these phenomena was needed, in particular to improve monitoring and prediction of climate variability, develop early warning systems at the regional levels, and build capacity at the regional and national levels in these areas, as well as in the prevention of natural disasters.

52. Several delegations noted that the recent El Niño phenomena had caused extensive damage to vulnerable populations in several countries, their natural resources and their livestock. In this connection, many delegations referred to a series of intergovernmental conferences on the 1997–1998 El Niño within the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction framework and in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 52/200, including the intergovernmental meeting of experts on El Niño held at Guayaquil, Ecuador, in November 1998. The objectives of these conferences were to improve the scientific understanding of and the ability to predict the environmental and societal impacts of the phenomena, and to define improved operational and institutional approaches to reducing damage from future occurrences.

53. Several countries indicated the need to improve scientific understanding of the role of oceans in modifying climatic extremes, such as El Niño, through an extended network of monitoring stations under the Global Ocean Observation System and other international programmes.

54. Some delegations noted that oceanographic observation was of growing importance in assessing the degree of climate change and other developments in the global environment. They called for the cooperation of the relevant authorities to advance such work.

Other marine pollution

55. Some delegations valued the contribution made by the Noordwijk expert meeting on environmental practices in offshore oil and gas activities, the holding of which was welcomed by the Commission at its fourth session.

56. A mention was made of the importance of reaching an early agreement in IMO on hazardous substances in anti-fouling paints and the spread of harmful aquatic organisms in ballast water, and in the International Seabed Authority on environmental standards for seabed prospecting and, eventually, for mining. Some delegations supported further consideration within IMO of ways to control air pollution from shipping and mandatory ship reporting systems.

57. Many delegations emphasized the importance of reaching early agreement, under the aegis of UNEP, on persistent organic pollutants.

58. Some delegations expressed continued support for improving the operation of GESAMP, while noting at the same time that regional approaches were most practical for improving access to sound scientific understanding. It was also noted that such an improved GESAMP should provide transparency, accountability and consultation.

Coral reefs and marine protected areas

59. Some delegations proposed the development of a global representative system of marine protected areas within and across national jurisdictions. A note of caution was voiced for applying the concept of marine protected areas on the high seas without any agreement on their sustainable use. It was recommended to focus on coastal areas and on encouraging every State concerned to exercise its national jurisdictions. It was also emphasized that further work in this area should be in line with the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 adopted by the General Assembly at its nineteenth special session.

60. Referring to the ICRI international tropical marine ecosystems management symposium held at Townsville, Australia, in November 1998, many delegations welcomed the renewed call to action by ICRI, and requested the Commission to reaffirm the importance of ICRI with a view to achieving its principal goals.

4. International coordination and cooperation

61. There was general agreement that coordination within and among Governments as well as among bodies within the United Nations system was vital and could be improved. The meeting welcomed the acknowledgment in paragraph 52 of the report of the Secretary-General on oceans and seas of the case for reviewing the working of the ACC Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas with a view to improving its effectiveness in coordination.

62. Some delegations drew attention to the need for greater synergy and better integration of oceans affairs within the United Nations system. It was mentioned that the annual debate on oceans and the law of the sea needs to be more transparent, more systematic, more responsive and better prepared. It was further mentioned that the Commission has a role to play in relation to oceans in preparing for the next review of the implementation of Agenda 21. The involvement of non-governmental actors was also underlined by some delegations.

63. Many delegations argued for the need for improved coordination at the intergovernmental level for achieving an holistic approach for global action on oceans. In this regard, some delegations mentioned specific proposals, some of which were presented in written form and are contained in the annex. Other proposals may emerge. Other delegations, however, cautioned against the establishment of a new institution before the problems and gaps in existing arrangements had been identified. They stressed instead the need for streamlining and reinforcing existing mechanisms.

64. Some delegations pointed out that further discussions would be needed to examine the purpose, format, timing, duration, frequency and reallocation of available funds, consistent with the relevant rules and regulations of the United Nations, when considering new organizational arrangements. Some other delegations pointed out that it is essential to identify problems in the existing international arrangements, and that if improved coordination is desirable in certain areas, attempts should first be made to make better use of the existing framework of relevant conventions and organizations.

III. Other matters

65. At the 6th meeting, on 5 March 1999, the Working Group considered the item and heard a briefing by the Director of the Division for Sustainable Development of the United Nations Secretariat.

IV. Adoption of the report

66. At the 7th meeting, on 5 March 1999, the Working Group had before it the draft report (E/CN.17/ISWG.II/1999/L.1), as well as a number of informal papers.

67. At the same meeting, the Working Group took note of the informal papers and adopted its report.

V. Organizational and other matters

A. Opening and duration of the session

68. The Inter-sessional Ad Hoc Working Group on Oceans and Seas and on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States met in New York from 1 to 5 March 1999, in accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 1998/295 of 31 July 1998. The Working Group held 7 meetings (1st to 7th meetings).

69. The meeting was opened by the temporary Chairman, George Talbot (Guyana), Vice-Chairman of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

B. Attendance

70. The session was attended by representatives of 8 States members of the Commission on Sustainable Development. Observers for other States Members of the United Nations and for the European Community, representatives of organizations of the United Nations system and secretariats of treaty bodies, as well as observers for intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, also attended.

C. Election of Officers

71. At the 1st meeting, on 1 March, the Working Group elected by acclamation John Ashe (Antigua and Barbuda) and Alan Simcock (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) as Co-Chairmen.

D. Agenda and organization of work

72. At the same meeting, after statements by the Co-Chairman and the representatives of Mexico (on behalf of the Rio Group) and UNEP, the Working Group adopted its provisional agenda as contained in document E/CN.17/ISWG.II/1999/1, and approved its organization of work. The agenda read as follows:

1. Election of Officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
3. Oceans and seas.
4. Sustainable development of small island developing States.
5. Other matters.
6. Adoption of the report of the Working Group.

E. Documentation

73. The Working Group had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General on oceans and seas (E/CN.17/1999/4);

(b) Report of the Secretary-General on progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (E/CN.17/1999/6):

(i) Climate change and sea-level rise (E/CN.17/1999/6/Add.1);

(ii) Waste management in small island developing States (E/CN.17/1999/6/Add.2);

(iii) Freshwater in small island developing States (E/CN.17/1999/6/Add.3);

(iv) Land resources in small island developing States (E/CN.17/1999/6/Add.4);

(v) Biodiversity resources in small island developing States (E/CN.17/1999/6/Add.5);

(vi) National institutions and administrative capacity in small island developing States (E/CN.17/1999/6/Add.6);

(vii) Regional institutions and technical cooperation for the sustainable development of small island developing States (E/CN.17/1999/6/Add.7);

(viii) Science and technology in small island developing States (E/CN.17/1999/6/Add.8);

(ix) Human resource development in small island developing States (E/CN.17/1999/6/Add.9);

(x) Management of coastal and marine resources in small island developing States (E/CN.17/1999/6/Add.10 and Corr.1);

(xi) Sustainable tourism development in small island developing States (E/CN.17/1999/6/Add.11);

(xii) Sustainable development of energy resources in small island developing States (E/CN.17/1999/6/Add.12);

(xiii) Telecommunications development in small island developing States (E/CN.17/1999/6/Add.14);

(xiv) Sustainable development of air transport in small island developing States (E/CN.17/1999/6/Add.15);

(xv) Maritime transport in small island developing States (E/CN.17/1999/6/Add.16);

(c) Report of the Secretary-General entitled "Progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States: current donor activities" (E/CN.17/1999/7).

Notes

[1] United Nations publication, Sales No. E.83.V.5.

[2] See *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3–14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93 I.8 and Corrigendum), resolution I, annex II.

[3] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1046, No. 15749, p. 120.

[4] See Protocol of 1978 Relating to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1340, No. 22484), p. 263.

Annex

Proposals by delegations on ways and means of enhancing the effectiveness of the annual debate of the General Assembly on oceans and the law of the sea

1. Australia (on behalf of the Group of South Pacific Countries)*

The members of the Group of South Pacific Countries (SOPAC) have a strong interest in the ongoing survival of the oceans. We are "custodians" of a very substantial part of the world's oceans, and many of us are dependent on the oceans for our development and survival.

In 1992, Agenda 21 recognized the need for improved coordination to ensure that an integrated and multisectoral approach to marine issues is pursued at all levels and communicated to the General Assembly as the appropriate body to provide this leadership.

However, what takes place at present is inadequate for the needs of the international community. The annual item in the General Assembly is too brief and provides no real opportunity for dialogue. Neither can the responsibility for coordination be left to the five-year review of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

The Secretary-General's report to the Commission points to a growing consensus that action needs to be taken to improve international cooperation and coordination of oceans issues at the global level. The report also identifies the immense problems being faced in the oceans, especially overfishing and marine pollution, which need to be tackled if we are to have any security in the future.

The SOPAC countries believe that steps need to be taken to improve the General Assembly's ability to provide leadership and coordination in the management of the world's oceans. It is clear that the management of our oceans can no longer be left solely to separate regimes and sectors but must be considered in a comprehensive and integrated way, as required by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea regime and Agenda 21.

SOPAC countries consider that a forum needs to be found to provide for a regular and in-depth overview of ocean affairs at the intergovernmental level.

Such a forum would need:

- To be **regular** and **open-ended** (it should meet either annually or biennially);
- To be **inclusive** (it should have the participation of all Governments and all applicable United Nations and regional bodies);
- A **broad mandate** to consider all oceans issues in an integrated way (and in a manner consistent with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea);
- **Sufficient time** to carry out an effective review of activities (at least one week);
- To allow for **input from the wider international community** interested in oceans (such as NGOs, the private sector, local bodies and organizations);
- To be able to **influence the activities of relevant United Nations and regional bodies** (either through its own decisions or recommendations to the General Assembly).

* Federated States of Micronesia, Australia, Fiji, Marshall Islands, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Samoa and Vanuatu.

SOPAC countries consider that the Commission has a responsibility to address the issue of international cooperation and coordination, and to make recommendations on what concrete steps should be taken in this area.

2. Canada

High-level ocean symposium

The very nature of ocean management creates a special need for participatory dialogue on a wide range of cross-sectoral issues. We would expect that the 10-year review of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) would pay particular attention to integrated oceans management issues. With this in mind, it may be useful for the Commission, in collaboration with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea secretariat and other oceans-related bodies, to help organize a high-level ocean symposium in the period before the 2002 review.

The elements and particulars of such an ocean symposium could include:

- The symposium could consider overall coordination and collaboration at the international level, provide a gap analysis and possibly provide a reference for further development of an ongoing process, as required;
- Occur in New York, making best use of the United Nations calendar and possibly directly following or preceding other ocean meetings, such as the meeting of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea;
- Such a symposium could be under the overall direction of a high-level steering group, chaired by a respected figure experienced in international oceans issues;
- The symposium should draw on the experience of a wide range of stakeholders, and should reflect the Commission's open, flexible and inclusive approach to non-governmental participation.

The overall goal of such a symposium would be to enhance dialogue and thus gain better understanding of integrated ocean management at the global level. Cross-sectoral dialogue could add to useful suggestions for making effective use of existing ocean bodies and/or organizations. An important objective would be to consider means of promoting international collaboration in a number of horizontal ocean management areas, such as policy development, capacity-building, scientific research, and information sharing related to ocean resources, health and processes. The results of the symposium should inform the 10-year review of UNCED to be held in 2002.

3. India

An area of concern that has increasingly come to the fore, given the extent of work in a variety of forums on different aspects of issues relating to oceans and seas, is the call for enhanced global coordination on issues relating to oceans and seas. Specifically, we have noted the range of suggestions highlighted in the report of the Secretary-General, including the call for a new forum on oceans, such as a standing committee of the General Assembly or the convening of a United Nations conference on ocean affairs, as proposed by the Independent World Commission on Oceans, or even the proposal to entrust the Trusteeship Council with such coordination. We would, however, caution against a proliferation of

forums and the creation of any new mechanisms or forums over and above the varied existing forums, where diverse aspects of issues arising from oceans and seas are already debated. It is our belief that the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea already provides a comprehensive legal framework for integrated treatment of issues relating to oceans and seas, as recognized in chapter 17 of Agenda 21. Nevertheless, to enhance coordination, particularly in intergovernmental debate and action, it may be useful to examine more closely the suggestion that we expand the consideration of this issue in the General Assembly. The General Assembly already undertakes an annual discussion of developments relating to oceans and seas. At present, this is only scheduled for a day, and we recognize that this may be insufficient to achieve the coordination that is necessary. It would be useful to examine in more detail how the General Assembly debate can be used more effectively to achieve an overview of issues relating to oceans and seas so that more coordinated and integrated action can be undertaken.

4. Malta

Establishment of a committee of the whole of the General Assembly on Oceans

The present state: lack of ocean governance

The preamble of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the report of the Secretary-General on oceans and the report of the Independent World Commission on Oceans recognize that issues relating to the oceans are interrelated and thus need to be considered comprehensively. This calls for an integrated management approach for ocean use which takes into consideration both socio-economic needs and environmental concerns.

Furthermore, the rate of change in the development of ocean-related activities is confronting the international community with new challenges, and in this respect a holistic view is needed for the oceans so as not to further increase the degradation of the marine environment.

During the last decade, a number of new international instruments relating directly or indirectly to oceans have been adopted. Moreover, the issue of ocean governance is being discussed by a number of international organizations. These factors and other initiatives undertaken in this field highlight the need for coordination and an integrated approach which reflects a balance between different interests, as contained in the Convention.

The number of institutions interested in ocean affairs is wide-ranging and includes Governments, intergovernmental organizations, the private sector and civil society, including NGOs. Each of these is involved with its own interests and activities, and there is often a minimum of communication between these various sectors. Unfortunately, this current state of affairs does not reflect the unifying and comprehensive nature of the Convention on the Law of the Sea.

During the Second London Oceans Workshop, Simon Upton, Chair of the seventh session of the Commission, highlighted this situation and underscored the need to improve the existing structure of ocean governance. He stated that at present, the complexity of oceans arrangements at the regional and global levels is frightening, and that if a one-day debate in the General Assembly is not an adequate amount of time to devote to oceans issues, there is a need to examine other opportunities for States to bring the appropriate level of

expertise to bear on these issues and focus on the priorities of the various agencies within the United Nations framework.

A new forum on oceans

This lack of coordination calls for the United Nations to find a forum which would make possible wider participation and exchange of views on all ocean issues, especially since the time currently being allotted to discuss this issue during the General Assembly is limited. As stated by the Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority during the fifty-third session of the General Assembly, the need for an additional forum is therefore self-evident.

Now that the legal framework provided by the Convention is in place, such a forum would allow for full participation and an exchange of views among all interest groups on all aspects of the oceans, and would provide States with an opportunity to further promote and ameliorate their efforts in the implementation of the Convention.

Along these lines, the Deputy Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, John Prescott, in the concluding remarks of his keynote address to the Second London Oceans Workshop, stated that we need a single global focus for integrating global action on the oceans. A major task for the Commission on Sustainable Development in 1999, and for us as we prepare for it, is to find some means to promote international integration.

The United Nations needs to respond in this manner and to deal with ocean issues in their totality. The relationship between economics, social issues, environmental problems and legal aspects should be brought to the forefront so as to achieve the sustainable development of oceans. As stated by Satya Nandan, Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority, the challenge for the General Assembly is how to respond to the various initiatives to devise a global forum which reflects this integrated approach. This broad-based dialogue would be in line with chapter 17 of Agenda 21 and the conclusions of the report of the Independent World Commission on Oceans.

Proposal by the Government of Malta for the establishment of a committee of the whole of the General Assembly on ocean affairs

Guido de Marco, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malta, President of the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly and a member of the Independent World Commission on Oceans, in his address to the fifty-third session of the General Assembly during its general debate, stated that many feel that a forum is needed to consider the closely interrelated problems of ocean space as a whole, and that in this respect Malta suggests positive consideration of the suggestion that the Assembly institute a biennial committee of the whole to review ocean-related questions in an integrated manner.

The suggestion of a governance forum for ocean affairs arises from the fact that all ocean questions and activities are interrelated, and thus the machinery and process to deal with oceans should take into consideration all ocean aspects in an integrated manner and serve as a coordinating and multidisciplinary forum.

In contrast, at present the variety of activities related to the oceans is reflected in a number of United Nations bodies, including the International Maritime Organization, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, all of which have a different mandate and are working on their own particular agenda, with little or no coordination among their activities related to oceans.

This situation calls for coordination in the sphere of the oceans. The issue is how to create a forum to provide an exchange of views and oversee the work of the various United Nations bodies and institutions so that it is more coordinated and thus avoids duplication of efforts and resources.

Such a forum, apart from promoting coordination among the various United Nations activities in the sphere of the oceans, would also help countries in the development of their national capacity for ocean management and in their implementation of universal conventions through an increased awareness on ocean affairs.

Aware that the legal framework provided by the Convention is already in place and that countries that have been enacting legislation regarding ocean affairs, a number of Member States feel that the international community should be discussing oceans in their totality by taking into consideration their environmental, social and economic aspects, together with legal ones. In this regard, the General Assembly should have the overall responsibility for dealing with oceans in a comprehensive manner, especially since other bodies advocate a sectoral approach.

The relationship between Conference of Parties to the Convention and a forum on oceans would be that while the Conference of Parties can take decisions and can amend the Convention, certain issues could be discussed in a less formal, non-juridical way and in their totality, including environmental and socio-economic aspects, by such a committee of the whole. This forum would be of a deliberative nature, and would not interfere with the Convention, which is the pertinent legal body.

There are indications of an emerging consensus that it is only through the General Assembly, due to its universal membership, that ocean affairs could be dealt with in a comprehensive, integrated and multisectoral manner, including the relationship between the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the ocean-related parts of the conventions emanating from the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

However, there is a realization, as expressed, among others, by the Chairman of the Commission, that the General Assembly, due to its full agenda, does not have the necessary time for the comprehensive and integrated consideration of ocean affairs.

In view of this problem, the Government of Malta is proposing to the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly the establishment of a committee of the whole to deal with these issues in a comprehensive manner and on a regular basis, and to serve as a means of coordination on ocean affairs in the United Nations system.

The aim of such a forum would be that of identifying problematic areas which could subsequently be referred to and taken up by the General Assembly.

The rationale behind the establishment of a committee of the whole rather than to have some other type of forum is outlined below.

Universal participation by United Nations Member States

Universal participation of all United Nations Member States is of great importance since oceans and their management are of direct and indirect interest to all countries. Thus, while the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea is not universal since not all countries have ratified the Convention, the proposed committee of the whole would be inclusive and provide an opportunity for all Member States to participate in an intergovernmental forum on ocean affairs.

A committee reporting to the General Assembly

This committee of the whole would report on coordination in ocean affairs directly to the General Assembly as the ultimate United Nations body, which is in a position to take decisions on ocean affairs in a comprehensive and effective manner. The committee, rather than being a decision-making body, is envisaged as having a deliberative nature, and would report to the Assembly on coordination and problematic areas.

Inclusion of United Nations bodies

This process should include the competent organizations of the United Nations system, regional commissions and the UNEP regional seas programmes coordinating units as observers. This participation would bring different perspectives and priorities together and thus enhance coordination between the various initiatives being taken on oceans.

Participation of civil society

Participation of civil society, including pertinent NGOs, is important for the comprehensiveness of this forum. While keeping in mind that decision-making will continue to be exercised by Governments, participation of civil society in the form of presentations would enrich the process by bringing to the committee the ideas and expertise of civil society in this field. In this regard, the approach adopted by the United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks for dealing with NGO participation could be taken up as a model for this forum. In the said Conference, NGOs presented group statements rather than individual statements so as to optimize the limited time available. As regards transparency, NGO representatives were present during the intergovernmental meetings as observers.

Meeting on a biennial basis

The committee of the whole would meet on a biennial basis outside the General Assembly period. Having the meeting scheduled in the United Nations calendar would limit the financial implications of these meetings. Moreover, if the meeting is held outside the General Assembly period, the work and deliberations of the committee could be conducted in a more comprehensive fashion, as required by the very nature of ocean issues. Due to the multifaceted nature of such a forum, servicing by the United Nations Secretariat could be carried out by the various departments according to the theme under consideration.

Possible elements of a draft resolution

In line with the established procedure, this proposal should be discussed by the Commission's ad hoc working group on oceans, and a resolution should be drafted by the Commission for adoption by the Economic and Social Council. The said resolution might include the following elements:

The Economic and Social Council,

Convinced that the closely interrelated matters of ocean space need to considered as a whole,

Further convinced that the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea continues to be the legal framework for the oceans,

Welcoming regional and functional endeavours within this framework,

Recognizing that only the General Assembly, with its universal membership and multisectoral competence, is capable of effectively dealing with the complex issues involved,

Noting an emerging consensus that the one-day debate at the General Assembly is not enough time for effective, comprehensive, integrated, multisectoral review of ocean issues,

Determined to follow up the International Year of the Ocean with a concrete contribution to the enhancement of ocean governance for sustainable development,

1. *Decides*:

(a) To establish a committee of the whole to follow developments relating to ocean affairs and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea; to foster a coherent approach to the implementation of the global ocean regime established by the Convention, to encourage its ratification and effective implementation, to identify emerging issues and persistent problems which require international action that would be built upon the basis provided by the Convention, in its integration with other ocean-related conventions, agreements and programmes; and to take a more active part in anticipating areas of concern and devising strategies to address them effectively;

(b) That the committee, comprising all Member States of the United Nations, should be open to the participation of competent non-governmental organizations;

(c) That the committee should meet in regular sessions of two to three weeks every other year;

(d) That the work of the committee should be based on and should examine in depth the comprehensive report by the Secretary-General, which would be prepared, as heretofore, by the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, the Commission on Sustainable Development and the other competent international organizations;

(e) That time should be set for hearings at which NGOs, the private sector and independent scientists could present their views to the committee;

2. *Invites* the General Assembly, at its fifty-fourth session, to give consideration to the establishment, as its subsidiary body, of a committee on oceans that would assist the Assembly in carrying out its functions related to oceans and the law of the sea. Such a committee could:

(a) Provide a forum for in-depth deliberations on developments related to ocean affairs and the Law of the Sea;

(b) Foster a coherent approach to the implementation of the global oceans regime established by the Convention and promote effective implementation of its provisions;

(c) Identify emerging issues and persistent problems that require international action that need to be brought to the attention of the Assembly;

(d) Promote an integrated approach to work under the Convention and other oceans-related international legal instruments, agreements and programmes of action;

3. *Recommends* in this context that such a committee meet for a period of two to three weeks every other year; that it have a thematic work programme that would allow the committee to focus its deliberations at a given session on a number

of specific issues to be determined by the Assembly; and that it report to the Assembly under the item "Oceans and the law of the sea" of the Assembly's agenda;

4. *Also recommends* that the committee be open to the participation of all Member States of the United Nations and of the specialized agencies of the United Nations system; and that it provide for effective participation of observers from the organizations of the United Nations system involved in activities related to oceans, as well as from accredited non-governmental organizations, as appropriate, including those representing the private sector and the academic community;

5. *Further recommends*, subject to the decision of the Assembly on its establishment, that the work of the committee be based on thematic analytical reports of the Secretary-General of the United Nations that would be prepared with the active involvement of all relevant parts of the United Nations Secretariat, and in close collaboration with relevant international organizations and agencies within and outside the United Nations system.

5. Mexico (on behalf of the Rio Group)

Institutional coordination in the area of oceans and seas

Background considerations

The Rio Group recognizes the problem of institutional coordination on issues pertaining to oceans and seas, and welcomes the opportunity to engage into a discussion on this important matter.

The Rio Group emphasizes that the seventh session of the Commission is the first opportunity for dealing with this issue at the intergovernmental and expert levels.

Since the problems of the oceans and seas are very sensitive, affect sustainability and have consequences in other areas, the Rio Group stresses that the analysis of the institutional coordination to be undertaken should be gradual.

The Rio Group is of the opinion that the discussion of the institutional coordination problem in oceans and seas should encompass the consideration of the different components of the problem, as well as of the pertinent actors involved in the question, including meetings of States Parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

The Rio Group supports an open process of analysis that allows the presentation of further proposals and submission of ideas.

Whatever the outcome of this analysis might be, the solution should aim to use the bodies that already exist within the United Nations system.

Given the importance of this issue, it is clear that we should provide for enough time to reflect on the problem and the proposals submitted so far. Hence, the Rio Group proposes the scheme set out below.

Elements of consensus

The Rio Group identifies the following elements as a basis for consensus-building:

(a) There is a recognition of the need to strengthen coordination;

(b) There is a recognition of the importance of the review by the General Assembly of the overall developments relating to ocean affairs;

(c) This exercise should not lead to the creation of new bodies;

(d) The ways and means to strengthen the coordination should not require additional financial resources.

Proposal for a process

1. The consideration of this problem should begin at the seventh session of the Commission and should lead to substantive discussion at the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

2. In order to prepare the discussions the following elements would be involved:

- At what level and to what extent do we have the problem(s) of coordination?
- An inventory of the bodies involved in the functions of coordination (who coordinates what and at what level?).

3. There should be a meeting at which full consideration is given to these issues and full stock can be taken from the comments, considerations and proposals made by Governments, agencies, intergovernmental organizations and NGOs. The meeting should be open-ended, secure full participation and be transparent.

6. United States of America

Proposal for an open-ended working group on oceans issues

There appears to be general agreement that it is important to improve and facilitate intergovernmental consideration of oceans issues at the United Nations. At the same time, it is important that this be done within existing resources, without creating new institutions, and by building on the General Assembly's existing mandate with respect to oceans and the law of the sea. Therefore, it is proposed to establish an open-ended working group of the General Assembly on oceans issues.

The proposal has the following elements and procedural aspects:

- The Commission would recommend to the Economic and Social Council, and the Council would recommend to the General Assembly that the Assembly establish an open-ended working group;
- The working group would be designed to improve intergovernmental cooperation on and coordination of oceans issues;
- The working group would review relevant issues and make recommendations to the General Assembly to be considered at its annual sessions under the oceans and law of the sea agenda item;
- The working group would also have the opportunity to review and comment on the annual report of the Secretary-General on oceans issues;
- The best time for the working group to meet would be in conjunction with the annual meeting of States Parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which normally occurs in the spring;
- The costs of the open-ended working group would be met within the existing budget for the law of the sea and ocean affairs subprogramme;
- Adequate involvement of non-governmental actors would need to be ensured.

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19–30 April 1999

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New York, 1–5 March 1999

Corrigendum

Annex

The annex pertains to the Co-Chairmen's summary of discussions (sect.II.B) only, and should be inserted after paragraph 64.

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1. *Delete* the title of the annex.

2. The annex pertains to the Co-Chairmen's summary of discussions (sect.II.B) only, and should be inserted after paragraph 64.

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Meeting of representatives of donors and small island developing States, 24–26 February 1999

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. Introduction

1. In response to General Assembly resolutions 51/183, 52/202 and 53/189, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), organized a meeting of representatives of donors and small island developing States from 24 to 26 February 1999 on the mobilization of resources to assist small island developing States in effectively implementing the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

2. The meeting, which was co-chaired by Roger Ehrhardt, Director-General of the United Nations and Commonwealth Division, Multilateral Programme, Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), and Tuiloma Neroni Slade, Permanent Representative of Samoa to the United Nations and Chairman of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), was held at United Nations Headquarters and was very well attended throughout the three-day session. The participants included the representatives of prospective bilateral and multilateral donors, small island developing States, regional intergovernmental organizations of small island developing States, and a number of non-United Nations intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations.[1]

3. The objective of the meeting was to consider ways and means of assisting small island developing States in mobilizing resources to implement a range of sustainable development projects, proposals on which small island developing States had previously submitted to bilateral and multilateral donors through the Department, as well as to build momentum at the international level for the continued implementation of the Programme of Action, both as a prelude to the special session of the General Assembly and for future years.

4. In his opening remarks, Mr. Ehrhardt welcomed the meeting as a valuable opportunity for promoting an open and frank exchange of views between small island developing States and the donor community on the plans and priorities of these States. He also indicated that another contribution of this meeting could take place during informal consultations between donors and small island developing States on specific projects and concrete sustainable development issues facing small island developing States and as an occasion for renewing partnership between donors and small island developing States. The Under-Secretary General for Economic and Social Affairs drew attention to the special characteristics of small island developing States, their constraints and handicaps, which necessitate greater efforts on their part to operationalize the Programme of Action effectively and to pursue its goals consistently. The Associate Administrator of UNDP stressed the linkages between human development and the need for environmental protection, and pledged continued UNDP support in a renewed partnership with other donors and small island developing States for the implementation of the Programme of Action. The Chairman of AOSIS stressed the sense of ownership felt by small island developing States towards the Programme of Action, and highlighted the efforts of small island developing States to translate it into practice. He mentioned that while small island developing States have embraced the Programme of Action as the main framework for their sustainable development, the attainment of its goals was predicated on a strengthened partnership, built on mutual trust, between small island developing States and donors (for the Co-Chairmen's highlights of the meeting, see annex I).

II. Major issues addressed by small island developing States

5. Small island developing States and regional organizations on behalf of small island developing States, had submitted 311 projects for review and for commitment of resources for the subsequent implementation of the projects, at the donors/small island developing States meeting. The project portfolio included national and regional projects, roughly in the ratio of three to one. Some 30 per cent of the projects were in the areas of human resources development and national institutions and administrative capacity, and some 28 per cent in waste management, coastal and marine resources and biodiversity resources. Annex IV provides a distribution of the projects by programme area, groups of small island developing States, and national and regional categories.

6. In their presentations, the representatives of small island developing States stressed their ecological fragility and the vulnerability of their small economies. They highlighted the disadvantages that derive from their location and physical characteristics — dispersion of islands over large areas in the case of archipelagic small island developing States; recurrent damages inflicted on small island developing States located in the cyclonic belt by natural disasters, such as hurricanes; overuse, rapid depletion and degradation of natural resources on account of their paucity relative to the demand for them. They also highlighted the disadvantages and constraints posed by the smallness of their economies and distance from their major trading partners — small size of labour force, which precludes the development of a critical mass of technical skills across the broad spectrum of sustainable development activities, which in turn impedes economic diversification and the flexibility needed to adapt to changing international markets; remoteness from their major trading partners, which gives rise to high international transportation costs and infrequency of marine and air transport services on account of their relatively low trade volumes; high unit costs of social and physical infrastructure on account of low demand and sub-optimal use, particularly in the very small and archipelagic States; inadequate investment resources for building critical infrastructure characterized by indivisibilities and requiring large investments, on account of low levels of absolute national savings even where per capita incomes are relatively high; vulnerability of their economies to shocks from the international economy on account of their high degree of openness and narrow specialization for the export market; near total reliance, in most cases, of both consumer and investment goods, including technology and energy, which translates into high levels of domestic prices.

7. Against the backdrop of the challenges facing small island developing States, their representatives elaborated on the considerable effort that small island developing States have made in the pursuit of sustainable development at the national and regional levels, complemented by international support. In that context, they outlined their respective measures to formulate national development strategies, action plans and policies, and to strengthen regulatory frameworks; establish or strengthen national institutions to coordinate implementation of the Programme of Action at the national level; and establish or strengthen regional institutions for effective regional coordination. Annex II provides a succinct account of the major actions taken by some of the small island developing States that participated in the meeting. The representatives of small island developing States pointed out that notwithstanding their efforts at the national and regional levels, progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action has been hampered by a number of factors, most importantly, lack of financial support from the international community, inadequate human resources with appropriate training, inadequate institutional capacity, inadequate capacity for the enforcement of environmental legislation and regulations, and inadequate investment resources.

8. They drew attention to some emerging constraints resulting from the globalization of production, distribution and finance, which is based on the ability — in terms of skilled human resources, technology and natural resource endowments — to take advantage of economies of scale and achieve a reduction of costs. Since small island developing States lack the necessary underpinnings they are unable to adapt to the emerging structures. They also pointed out the short-term constraints emerging from trade liberalization, which is eroding the trade preferences that they have benefited from faster than they can diversify and restructure their export sectors. They recognized the importance of the private sector in promoting sustainable development through internalization of environmental costs. They pointed out, however, that most of the projects that they had submitted fell in the category known as "public goods", whose benefits accrue to the public at large and from which profits are not easy to capture, which makes them ineligible for private investment.

9. They also drew attention to the inability of individual small island developing States to effectively negotiate international trade and other agreements, as well as their inability to meet the obligations arising from the bewildering array of trade agreements and international conventions without the support of the international community. They recognized the need to cooperate at the regional level, and stressed the need for permanent and effective regional coordination mechanisms where they do not exist. A permanent regional coordination mechanism in each region could provide much needed support for identifying realistic areas of cooperation, formulating regional cooperation plans, coordinating among small island developing States to implement plans, and providing technical support to small island developing States in negotiating international treaties and participating effectively in international negotiations. Small island developing States that had submitted projects discussed their relevance for promoting sustainable development and the external resources needed for implementing the projects. Generally, small island developing States recognized the extremely vital and critical role of donor support in attaining the goals of the Programme of Action, and called on the international community not to judge their eligibility for concessional assistance solely by the indicator of per capita income, which ignores their fragility, vulnerability and inability to generate adequate national savings relative to the enormity of investment required for sustainable development.

III. Donors' responses

10. Donors welcomed the opportunity provided by the forward-looking meeting to discuss concrete sustainable development issues with small island developing States, and commended the latter's commitment to the principles established at Rio de Janeiro and Barbados. There was broad recognition of the unique characteristics of small island developing States, including their ecological and economic vulnerability, and of the importance of developing satisfactory tools to assess relative vulnerability. The view was expressed that small island developing States find themselves in the front line facing the challenges created by climate change, globalization, trade liberalization, and rapid changes in information and communications technology.

11. Several bilateral and multilateral donors elaborated on the salient features of their current programmes of assistance to small island developing States, including in several cases their respective areas of focus and their respective aid modalities. Annex III contains a tabular account of some of the specifics of selected donors' aid programmes as outlined in the meeting. By and large, they indicated their willingness to consider funding the projects that fit in with their respective sustainable development priorities through their established mechanisms and modalities of aid allocation (see annex III). In this regard, the view was

expressed that donors need to take into account the priorities of small island developing States also.

12. Donors encouraged small island developing States to identify urgent and high priority issues, and on that basis to prioritize projects. On the question of prioritization it was pointed out that it is also important to ensure that major intra- and intersectoral linkages are taken into account since progress in some areas is dependent on action taken in other areas. Along the same line, it was proposed that small island developing States need to adopt a programme approach instead of a project-by-project approach in sustainable development planning, and to mainstream projects and programmes into comprehensive integrated national sustainable development plans that incorporate the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

13. Generally, donors attached great importance to effective cooperation and coordination at all levels. They invited small island developing States to strengthen public/private partnerships internally, and to enhance regional cooperation and coordination so as to benefit from synergy generated by experience and cost-sharing and by the exploitation of complementarities among human resources as well as material endowments of small island developing States. They also stressed the need for greater coordination among donors so as to ensure appropriate burden-sharing and avoid duplication of efforts and waste of resources so that scarce resources may be utilized with maximum effectiveness and efficiency. They emphasized the need to take advantage of all existing complementarities. In this context, they proposed an appropriate division of responsibilities between multilateral and bilateral donors, and called for a proper balance between national and regional programmes and projects.

14. Donors called on small island developing States to continue to formulate sustainable development strategies and policies, and to give greater importance to the private sector by putting in place appropriate policies that will encourage domestic private investment and attract foreign direct investment. Such investments are necessary to enhance small island developing States' export capacity, raise export earnings and reduce reliance on external assistance. In this context, it was observed that there is a positive correlation between the level of external assistance and the level of foreign direct investment in small island developing States; high levels of external assistance serve to reduce the perceived risks of investing in small island developing States and attract high levels of foreign direct investment. It was stated that it was not an either/or question, but that both external assistance and foreign direct investment are necessary. Donors called for the strengthening of small island developing States' statistical capabilities so that they may develop suitable indicators of progress in sustainable development, in particular indicators for monitoring the performance of projects and programmes to ensure that external funding is effectively utilized and set targets are attained. Performance indicators would also help donors to give an account to their taxpayers of results achieved with external assistance resources.

IV. Concluding remarks

15. The meeting provided prospective donors and other stakeholders with an opportunity to learn about the sustainable development priorities of small island developing States, the strategies that they have formulated to implement the Programme of Action and the constraints that they have encountered in the process of implementation. It also provided an opportunity for small island developing States to learn about the particular orientations of donors' aid programmes and their respective aid modalities. The discussions were

thoughtful and frank, and took place in a very amicable and collaborative spirit. There was consensus on a number of issues, such as the fragility and vulnerability of small island developing States, the handicaps of small economies, the need for comprehensive approaches to sustainable development planning, the need to build partnership at all levels, the need to strengthen regional cooperation among small island developing States, and the need for donor coordination, among others.

16. Although no specific pledges were made, the meeting served to strengthen the partnership between donors and small island developing States, and began a mutually satisfactory collaborative approach to cooperation between them that seems to be quite promising. A number of donors also indicated a willingness to provide support to small island developing States in their efforts to implement the Programme of Action generally, in particular to the projects that had been submitted. They indicated that the next step could be a thorough review of the projects and consultations with small island developing States Governments at the bilateral level through their established mechanisms.

17. It was agreed that the informal consultations between the focal points of small island developing States and prospective donors represented in New York that had been initiated prior to the meeting should continue with a view to discussing the issues raised during the meeting. The working group could be open-ended, and could discuss both organizational matters and thematic issues in the context of the preparation of the special session of the General Assembly.

18. The outcomes of the meeting will serve as a valuable input to the seventh session of the Commission on Sustainable Development and the special session of the General Assembly to be held in September 1999.

Notes

[1] A list of participants is available in the Division for Sustainable Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs; it has also been posted on the Internet on the Department's Web page at www.un.org/esa/sustdev/sids.htm.

Annex I

Co-Chairmen's highlights of the meeting

Objectives of the meeting:

- To focus attention on a range of national and regional project portfolios that are consistent with the policy priorities of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, and that were submitted to donors for consideration.
- To provide donors and other stakeholders with an important opportunity to learn about the strategies, constraints, and priorities of small island developing States in implementing the Programme of Action.
- To engage in a frank and open discussion on resource mobilization for small island developing States activities under the Programme of Action.
- To strengthen the partnership between prospective donors and small island States.
- To build momentum behind the Programme of Action, both as a prelude to the special session taking place in fall 1999, and for future years.

The Co-Chairs felt that the meeting between small island developing States and prospective donors, which also included the active participation of multilateral and non-governmental organizations, went a long way towards recapturing the energy, goodwill and forward-looking approach of the 1994 Global Conference.

The following are particularly worth highlighting:

- The truly impressive quality of project proposals, numbering over 300, and presentations made by both small island developing States and the three regional organizations. These proved invaluable in casting light on the constraints, strategies and priorities of small island developing States.
- The thoughtful and positive interventions that were made by donors, multilateral organizations and NGOs which contributed to an open and frank exchange.
- The strong sense of commitment to and ownership by small island States of the Programme of Action. They clearly see the Programme of Action as the framework for their sustainable development efforts.
- The range of activities that have already been undertaken under the Programme of Action by small island developing States, donors, multilateral organizations and NGOs.
- The willingness of some of the world's major financial institutions to be flexible when exploring means to assist small island States.
- The ongoing support that is being provided to small island developing States by donors and global funding sources. small island developing States were particularly heartened by the possibilities of new support that were expressed during the meeting.
- The important preparatory work that was done by the informal working group in New York, which will play a significant role in preparing for the special session.

Lessons learned at the meeting:

- That the most important priority areas for small island developing States are: financing, human resource development, capacity-building, institutional strengthening and technology transfer.
- That there are specific disadvantages and vulnerabilities that derive from small size, most specifically:
  - (a) A narrow range of resources;
  - (b) An excessive dependence on international trade and hence vulnerability to global developments;
  - (c) Proneness to natural and environmental disasters;
  - (d) Overuse of natural resources and premature depletion;
  - (e) Costly public administration and infrastructure, including transportation and communications;
  - (f) Limited human resources compounded by high levels of migration, particularly of skilled persons, and by weak institutional capacities.
- That for small island developing States, there will be "no place to go when the tide comes in". Small island developing States are a laboratory for the direct impacts of the greenhouse effect and other hazards of climate change. In effect, environmental issues are one of the most fundamental concerns of small island developing States, as was clearly demonstrated by the number of projects submitted and the comments made at the meeting.
- That overseas development assistance to small island developing States has substantially declined and this has had a discernible impact on their countries. Small island States underlined that resource mobilization is clearly one of their main challenges. While their concern with the resource constraints facing small island States is by no means new, they believe that it must be addressed with a new resolve if the special session is to provide the needed impetus to implement the Programme of Action.
- That said, small island developing States recognize that they must step up their efforts to foster an enabling environment for external assistance. They must adopt, as appropriate, policy reforms to cope with the turbulence of global change, since good policies beget good projects and good projects foster effective implementation. Small island developing States must also intensify their search for new modalities for resource mobilization, particularly for regional initiatives.
- The critical need for improved and effective coordination — not only by small island developing States, donors, and multilateral organizations, but also within the United Nations system as a whole — was noted during the meeting. There is much room for improvement in this area, especially since better coordination would reduce costs and improve effectiveness and efficiency.
- More generally, small island developing States believe that the potential for greater resource mobilization can be enhanced by more effective coordination on a number of fronts: at the national and regional levels, including a strengthened regional mechanism; among donors, through more creative interaction with the private sector and NGOs; and through the strengthening of focal points within the United Nations system, including the small island developing States Unit.

- In the area of coordination, the valuable and critical role that can be played by Small Island Developing States Network, a UNDP-funded global Internet network which shares information and enables rapid coordination of action on pressing island issues, was highlighted. The comprehensive development framework by the World Bank also offers an important opportunity to enhance coordination at the country level and partnership with local governments.

- The need for a wide participatory approach was mentioned by donors. Small island States are to be commended for having consulted a wide range of stakeholders when determining specific needs and priorities and ensuring that these were reflected in project proposals.

- Although small island developing States have been encouraged by donors to prioritize, it became evident at the meeting that this is not a simple and clear-cut process. Fundamental issues such as education and health must not be lost in the formula.

- Several donors touched on the need for an output — a results-oriented approach to development projects and the critical value of developing indicators to measure progress. They also highlighted the need for a national and regional balance in development efforts, and underlined the role that the private sector can play in the area of resource mobilization.

- Strengthening the capacity of small island developing States and enhancing their competitiveness to facilitate and enable their effective participation in the global economy was also raised by several interlocutors.

- Finally, island States underlined that donor funding to small island developing States is smart money given their strong commitment to and engagement in the Programme of Action. The partnership between small island developing States and donors is critical if the Programme is to achieve its objectives.

Follow-up:

The issue of resource mobilization is obviously an ongoing process, leading up to the special session, and beyond. More specifically, the concrete suggestions set out below were made at the meeting.

- That the informal working group continue to meet on a regular basis in preparation for the special session in September. In this way, missions in New York can play a vital facilitating role.

- That individual small island developing States follow up in their capitals with donor missions to move forward on projects.

- That small island developing States Governments ensure that the proposed projects are incorporated within their national plans so that donors can be assured of the priority attached to them.

- That donor, multilateral and NGO representatives return to their headquarters and inform their offices in small island developing States of the conclusion of this meeting and alert them to expected follow-up.

- That regional small island developing States organizations explore means for strengthening regional arrangements, and ways of dealing with some of the difficulties identified, including coordination and the operation of focal points.

- That a written summary of the meeting be circulated to all participants, and that an oral summary be made at the inter-sessional meeting of the Commission on Sustainable Development on small island developing States.

In closing:

The meeting was about the strengthening and enrichment of the partnership between small island developing States and the international community. Everyone present agreed that in this context, it was extremely worthwhile and successful.

Annex II

Action taken at the national level to promote sustainable development[a]

Countries	*National strategies and policies to implement Programme of Action*	*Legislative framework plans*	*Initiatives taken and achievements*	*Focus areas*
Bahrain	Environmental Affairs has adopted three environmental policies, namely, the precautionary principle, the polluter pays principle and the cooperation principle. The three principles guide the interpretation of legislation in major fields of concern and administration of the national community	In 1996, Legislative Decree No. 21 called for a reorganization of environmental administration and the establishment of Environmental Affairs	Environmental protection is now the responsibility of Environmental Affairs, which is part of the Ministry of Housing, Municipalities and Environment	Terrestrial and marine resources; management of water resources; climate change issues and obligations; waste management; biodiversity protection; pollution control
Barbados	The national commission on sustainable development has been working to develop a national sustainable policy and plan	Legislative instruments have been passed specifically to ensure coastal protection and conservation, and all-encompassing environmental management legislation has been proposed	Establishment of a separate Ministry of Environment, Energy and Natural Resources; the South Coast Sewerage Project and a solid waste management project will soon be completed; a coastal zone management unit has been created	Ensuring the input and involvement of the private sector and civil society; coastal zones and fragile marine ecosystems
Cuba	In 1997, the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment headed an intense process of analysis and intersectoral coordination that resulted in a national environmental strategy	In 1997, the Cuban Parliament approved a new Law of the Environment, establishing the basis for a coherent and integrated legal framework and facilitating the inclusion of the environmental dimension in development plans at the national and local levels	National programme for integrated coastal management; a national council for river basins has been created; a country study of the biological diversity of Cuba has been completed	Soil degradation; deterioration of sanitation and environmental conditions in human settlements; pollution of marine waters and interior waters; deforestation; loss of biological diversity
Cyprus	The major sustainable development goals of Cyprus have been included in the strategic development plan for the period 1994–1998; this will be followed by the plan for the period 1999–2003, currently under preparation	Drafted bill for the protection of the environment, which contains full provisions for the application of environmental impact assessment measures	A study was commissioned and financed under the SINERGY programme of the EU, entitled: "Preparation of an action plan for improving the efficiency of the energy sector"	Fiscal instruments, information, research and participation; waste management, radiation, atmosphere, noise, chemicals, industrial accidents, biotechnology, and the protection of nature and wildlife

Countries	*National strategies and policies to implement Programme of Action*	*Legislative framework plans*	*Initiatives taken and achievements*	*Focus areas*
Fiji	Parliament has approved a new strategic plan for Fiji for 1999–2001	A sustainable development bill will soon be presented to Parliament; it will ensure the sustainable use of resources	Establishment of a national council for sustainable development; environmental management units within government ministries, departments and agencies; an environmental trust fund; a tribunal; the strengthening of the focal environmental agency in government and the establishment of an ozone depleting substance and climate change unit, energy conservation unit and natural resource management unit	Development plan highlights the strategies to achieve sustainable economic and social progress at the end of the 20th century, and points to the positive indicators for sustainable economic recovery; sectoral policies: natural resource utilization, development of human resources, provision of infrastructure and other essential utilities, provision of core social services — education health and housing
Grenada	Efforts have been made to implement all relevant international instruments	..	In addition to formal school education, Grenada provided evening classes for adults in continuing education; Grenada has made efforts to encourage the participation of all groups of society, including women	Emphasis on education
Guyana	Has developed a national sustainable development strategy based on a full commitment to the principles of sustainable development as embodied in Agenda 21 and the Programme of Action; has revised its national policy in forestry, energy, biodiversity, protected areas, science and technology, and land	Has taken action in institutional strengthening, including forestry management	Has set up a committee on natural resources and environment, chaired by the Prime Minister; a natural resources and environment advisory committee, headed by the President's scientific adviser, has also been established	..
Jamaica	National environmental Action Plan and numerous other policy documents, such as the 1997 national land policy, the 1997 national industrial policy, the 1997 policy of Jamaica's system of protected areas	1991: passed the Natural Resources Conservation Act; 1998: drafted the national irrigation master plan, watershed management plan, national environmental education action plan for sustainable development (1998–2010)	Creation of the Natural Resources Conservation Authority in 1991; additional initiatives include establishment of the Sustainable Development Council of Jamaica in 1996, and of the Jamaica Sustainable Network Programme in 1997	Water resource management, tourism, taxes, disposal of non-biodegradable materials, economic instruments in environmental management, sustainable indicators

Countries	*National strategies and policies to implement Programme of Action*	*Legislative framework plans*	*Initiatives taken and achievements*	*Focus areas*
Kiribati	National strategies	..	A national committee was established prior to UNCED; this committee has been revived as the Kiribati National Sustainable Development Committee	..
Maldives	In 1990, the first national environment action plan was formulated; in 1997, the first plan was reviewed and a second plan formulated	Formulation and enactment of the Environmental Protection Act; ratification and implementation of various international conventions and agreements	Introduction of environmental impact assessment procedures; establishment of an environment research centre; designation of protected areas and species; restructuring of the national commission for the protection of the environment	Climate change and sea level rise; coastal zone management; biological diversity conservation; integrated reef resource management; integrated water resource management; management of solid waste and sewage; pollution control and hazardous wastes; sustainable tourism development; land resource management; sustainable agriculture; human settlements and urbanization
Mauritius	..	..	Mauritius is engaged both at a national and regional level to address the issues of the Programme of Action. Mauritius is fully involved in regional action under the Indian Ocean Commission	Coastal and marine resource management; freshwater resources management
Micronesia	Implementation and monitoring mechanisms under the oversight of the Sustainable Development Council and with support from the Sustainable Development Unit within the Department of Economic Affairs	..	Reorganization of the structure and operations of the Government to increase efficiency and improve financial sustainability	..
Seychelles	The environmental management plan was launched in 1990; Seychelles is now in the process of assessing the implementation of the plan; the aim is to articulate a new plan for the period 2000–2010	..	In the process of finalizing the 1999–2007 "Seychelles tourism master plan", and has completed the national biodiversity action plan, in fulfilment of the obligations of the Convention on Biological Diversity; the Seychelles National Biodiversity Centre has been launched	Focus on strengthening the legal and institutional arrangements for environmental protection and natural resources management

Countries	*National strategies and policies to implement Programme of Action*	*Legislative framework plans*	*Initiatives taken and achievements*	*Focus areas*
Solomon Islands	National environment management strategy; the Government has incorporated the environmental issues and strategies into its three-year medium-term development strategy	Two items of legislation — the Wildlife Protection Act of 1998 and the Environment Protection Act of 1998 — have been passed in Parliament	Formulation of a national biodiversity strategy action plan is currently being pursued, and will soon be recommended as part of the national report of the Convention on Biological Diversity	..
Suriname	Brought the overall environmental management directly under the responsibility of the President of Suriname	Through a Presidential decree, the National Council for the Environment was established as a policy and advisory body	Decision taken by the Government to preserve for conservation purposes 1.6 million hectares of tropical rainforest	Institutional mechanisms, design and implementation of environmental policies
Saint Lucia	There is no deliberate national policy to implement the Programme of Action. Rather, the Government pursues its development strategy by addressing a wide range of issues, several of which fall within the Programme of Action	Formulation of the national environmental action plan; development of a proposed watershed and environment management plan	Establishment of a sustainable development unit in the Ministry of Finance and Planning; establishment of a national solid waste management authority	Budgetary reform, waste management, coastal zones, forestry, parks and protected areas and poverty alleviation
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	In both the medium-term economic strategy 1998–2000 and the 1999 budget address, the Government has placed strong emphasis on its goal of balanced growth and sustainable development	..	..	The major goal of the Government is to address the problems of unemployment and poverty; for 1999, the main pillars of the Government's programme are: economic diversification, efficiency and effectiveness of the public service, fiscal and regulatory framework, public sector finances, human resources and environmental management
Trinidad and Tobago	Has set out its vision, policies and strategies for sustainable development in a seven-year national strategic development framework for the period 1999–2005	..	..	Economic growth, social equity and progress and the protection of the environment; emphasis on promoting agriculture, light manufacturing, tourism and business service; in the short term: poverty eradication, employment and crime reduction

Note: Two dots (..) indicate that data are not available or are not reported separately.

[a] This is a compilation from the summary presentations made in the meeting; it is not a comprehensive account of action taken by small island developing States.

Annex III

Some specifics of donors' programmes in small island developing States reported in the meeting[a]

Donors	*Aid activities levels of assistance*	*Current programmatic priorities*	*Beneficiary country or region*	*Modalities and mechanisms of aid allocation*	*Willingness to review projects for possible funding*
AfDB	Over the period 1967–1998, the Bank Group committed about US$ 710 million in the six African small island developing States, 84% of which was concessional; this amount represents about 2% of the Bank Group's total commitments in all its borrowing regional member countries	Committed to assisting the African small island developing States in implementing priority projects and programmes to promote their sustainable development; the Bank Group's interventions in small island developing States cover such areas as agriculture, fisheries, transportation, human resources, freshwater supply, waste management, capacity-building and structural adjustment programmes to improve environment policy in the African small island developing States	..	The level of resources to be made available to each country for this purpose during the period 1999–2001 will depend on the outcome of the country performance assessment exercise and country strategy papers currently under way; resource allocation by the Bank Group is now performance based, and the African small island developing States would therefore be able to attract additional resources from the Bank Group and similar multilateral financial institutions by improving their performance defined in terms of policy portfolio performance	Yes
Australia	..	..	..	Interested in integrating small island developing States projects into existing funding processes, putting them through the existing channels	Yes
Canada	Provided support to OECS, CARICOM and the University of West Indies, and its support to regional organizations has been complementary to assistance by multilaterals	Support at the regional level focuses on oceans and fisheries resource management	Recently developed new relationships with Haiti and the Dominican Republic; at the country level, has a strong, multi-year support programme in Jamaica; has provided support for Guyana's tropical forest project, among other country projects	Favours project funding through existing mechanisms	Yes

Donors	*Aid activities levels of assistance*	*Current programmatic priorities*	*Beneficiary country or region*	*Modalities and mechanisms of aid allocation*	*Willingness to review projects for possible funding*
CDB	Over the period 1994–1998, CDB committed US$ 487 million to its small island developing States borrowing member countries, 47% of which was concessional; approximately US$ 259 million of the total resources over the period was committed for financing projects in the 15 priority areas of the Programme of Action	Committed to assisting and promoting the sustainable development of its borrowing member countries, 15 of which are small island developing States. CDB's normal lending policies allows coverage of all the priority areas of the Programme of Action; however, the Bank has been placing increasing emphasis on disaster management, waste management, tourism, human resources development and capacity-building in addition to fostering regional integration	Fifteen of CDB's 17 borrowing member countries are small island developing States; all are English-speaking small island developing States located within the Caribbean basin	The level of resources made available to each country is based on a country assistance strategy; these strategies are based on the priorities defined under the public sector investment programme and medium-term strategy of the country, which are frequently prepared with the assistance of CDB; the country's macroeconomic performance, portfolio performance and CDB's own exposure is also taken into consideration	Yes
Denmark	..	..	..	Can make available new financial resources for environment and sustainable use of resources; the choice of project will be based on priorities	..
EU/EDF	For the period 1996/2000, the European Development Fund package foreseen for the national and regional programmes for small island developing States is 1,024 million euros, with the Caribbean receiving 543 million, the Indian Ocean 286 million and the Pacific 149 million	The EU budget is oriented towards promoting actions in the fields of environment, food security, rehabilitation, co-financing with NGOs, humanitarian action, disaster prevention and preparedness and post-disaster support	Through EDF, EU has provided support to the Caribbean small island developing States and to CARICOM, whose secretariat has been strengthened for administering aid in environment, human resources and disaster preparedness	Additional assistance: European Development Fund, through such instruments as STABEX (e.g., banana-producing Windward Islands), SYSMIN (e.g., Jamaica), the Structural Adjustment Facility (e.g., Haiti)	..

Donors	*Aid activities levels of assistance*	*Current programmatic priorities*	*Beneficiary country or region*	*Modalities and mechanisms of aid allocation*	*Willingness to review projects for possible funding*
Finland	..	Made a decision to enter into negotiations to establish cooperation and partnership with small island developing States and the relevant regional bodies in the field of meteorology and hydrology through the World Meterological Organization and in cooperation with their national meterological institutes	The poorest countries are the central partners of development cooperation	During the last four years, development aid has been slowly increasing; about 40% of foreign aid is channelled through multilateral organizations, and about 60% through bilateral arrangements	..
France	Allocated more than US$ 110 million in bilateral aid to small island developing States alone in 1996	Early warning assistance in case of disasters, technical assistance in education, training, health	Bilateral aid has been concentrated on a "priority solidarity zone", which is defined and periodically updated by an inter-ministerial committee under the authority of the Prime Minister; the list comprises the following small island developing States: Vanuatu, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Lucia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Haiti, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Cape Verde, Comoros, Mauritius, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles	Started to reorganize its assistance mechanisms; small island developing States not belonging to the priority solidarity zone may receive some support through various other instruments, such as *Fonds français pour l'environment mondial, Fonds caraïbes, Fonds Pacifique*	..
GEF	..	..	..	GEF invited small island developing States to enter into dialogue with GEF national focal points; regional bodies will work to establish co-financing which is required by GEF	Yes

Donors	*Aid activities levels of assistance*	*Current programmatic priorities*	*Beneficiary country or region*	*Modalities and mechanisms of aid allocation*	*Willingness to review projects for possible funding*
Germany	Between 1994 and 1997, made available to 33 small island developing States in all regions an amount of DM 233 million, i.e., some 130 million US dollars, through its bilateral financial and technical cooperation; these figures include funds disbursed, as well as funds committed for ongoing or envisaged projects, and also include financial support by the federal Government to German-based NGOs which are active in Asia and Pacific, Caribbean and African small island developing States	Focal areas for bilateral cooperation are water supply and sanitation, family planning and health, education and vocational training, regional planning, fisheries and forests	A number of small island developing States continue to be partners in bilateral development cooperation, including Cape Verde, the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Papua New Guinea; in addition, supports the activities of a number of relevant regional organizations	Bilateral cooperation complements cooperation by the EC on behalf of EU member States	..
Japan	..	Supported small island developing States in disaster prevention, tourism, small and medium-sized enterprises, fishery and waste management; attaches great importance to projects in waste management, disaster prevention, national institutions and administrative capacity and human resource development	..	Small island developing States are encouraged to contact the appropriate Japanese authorities through Japanese embassies to explore funding of projects	Yes

Donors	*Aid activities levels of assistance*	*Current programmatic priorities*	*Beneficiary country or region*	*Modalities and mechanisms of aid allocation*	*Willingness to review projects for possible funding*
Habitat	..	Focuses on a few key issues: • Environmental impact of settlements, infrastructure and services on small island developing States fragile ecosystems • Vulnerability to natural disasters and improved settlements and infrastructure management for their reduction • Human resources development in the areas of integrated resource and settlements management	Pursued partnership with small island developing States through a series of projects implemented in the Caribbean, the Indian Ocean and the South Pacific over the last decade, mostly in collaboration with UNDP, CARICOM and OECS	..	..
ILO	..	The ILO's active partnership programme collaborates with social partners in many small island developing States so as to help their integration into the global economic system, on a fair and equitable basis; the international enterprise programme, for example, promotes the training of managers, entrepreneurs and skilled workers	..	..	..
Ireland	Trebled its ODA since UNCED; it is committed to multilateralism, and has steadily increased its contributions to United Nations activities; Ireland provides financial support to small island developing States through GEF	..	..	Ireland can provide support to some specific projects	Yes

Donors	*Aid activities levels of assistance*	*Current programmatic priorities*	*Beneficiary country or region*	*Modalities and mechanisms of aid allocation*	*Willingness to review projects for possible funding*
Italy	In the past two years, financed, through the United Nations Trust Fund for New and Renewable Resources of Energy, nine projects in seven small island developing States and 20 scholarships to experts from 11 small island developing States, and has provided assistance to four small island developing States struck by hurricanes	..	Currently financing cooperation projects in nine small island developing States	Italy's development cooperation is moving in a direction parallel to that of "economic partnership", especially in the field of ecotourism	..
Netherlands	ODA: 0.8% of GDP	..	..	ODA is limited to countries with structural adjustment programmes; criteria used for aid allocation: poverty level, quality of economic policy, good governance	..
New Zealand	ODA to small island developing States amounts to $NZ 100 million, and has steadily risen in NZ dollar terms and as a percentage of central government expenditure, and now stands above the OECD average ODA/GNP ratio	Assessment of capacity-building, vulnerability; supports strategies for environment, biodiversity, resource and waste management, climate change and phase-out of ozone depleting substances; in collaboration with FAO and WTO: enhancement of the capacity of Pacific islands to deal with the complexities of trade rules	Currently well over 55% of bilateral ODA is directed to 18 Pacific small island developing States and 25% of multilateral ODA specifically supports Pacific regional institutions; small island developing States, both in the Pacific and further afield in the Caribbean and the Indian Ocean, also benefit from a number of NZ global programmes, particularly in capacity-building	..	..
Norway	ODA: $1.2 billion per year, 0.9% of GDP; plans to increase ODA levels to 1% of GDP	..	..	Assistance to small island developing States given through multilateral channels	..
Spain	Committed substantial funds to projects in small island developing States	..	..	..	Yes

Donors	*Aid activities levels of assistance*	*Current programmatic priorities*	*Beneficiary country or region*	*Modalities and mechanisms of aid allocation*	*Willingness to review projects for possible funding*
Sweden	As a member of EU, contributed multilateral assistance to small island developing States	..	Involved with projects in five small island developing States	Allocation of aid according to some criteria	..
United Kingdom	..	Programme for next year will focus on basic education and good governance	Looked at opportunities to work with regional institutions, such as OECS and the Caribbean Development Bank	Aid delivered within the framework of country strategy papers worked out through bilateral consultations	Yes
UNEP	..	The special problems and requirements of small island developing States are recognized by GEF in three of its four concentration areas: protection of biological diversity, mitigation of climate change impacts and protection of international waters; UNEP/GEF-funded activities related to small island developing States include numerous projects in the area of biodiversity	..	UNEP's Environment Fund provides relatively small amounts for small island developing States-related activities, and, consequently, UNEP relies heavily on external sources of funding; the Global Environment Facility (GEF), of which UNEP is one of the three implementing agencies, remains one of the major potential sources of such funds; another source of funds for the implementation of the environmental aspects of the Programme of Action is the trust funds operated under the UNEP regional seas programme	..
UNESCO	..	..	Contributed to two major processes of consultation in 1997 and in 1998 for the Pacific and Caribbean regions, respectively; these endeavours are known as "Focus on the Pacific" and "Focus on the Caribbean"	Funding possibilities: UNESCO regular programme and extrabudgetary sources	..

Donors	*Aid activities levels of assistance*	*Current programmatic priorities*	*Beneficiary country or region*	*Modalities and mechanisms of aid allocation*	*Willingness to review projects for possible funding*
UNDP	Supported several activities designed to strengthen the capacities of small island developing States in crucial areas identified by the Programme of Action; examples include the preparation of a Small Island Developing States Technical Assistance Programme, the assessment of unmet technical cooperation needs and priorities in the various small island developing States regions and the launching of a pilot Small Island Developing States Information Network	Crucial areas are identified by the Programme of Action	Several projects in Pacific, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean, Atlantic and Caribbean small island developing States		Yes
United States of America	..	Expressed its particular interest in small island developing States work in implementing the international coral reef initiative, and in addressing coastal and marine resources, as well as land-based activities that affect the marine environment	..	..	..
World Bank	..	Interested in promoting sustainable tourism and industry in the broadest aspects	..	Will support projects as long as they are consistent with country strategy	Yes
WHO	..	Can provide training and technical cooperation for environmental impact assessment and vulnerability analysis for natural disaster preparedness	..	..	..

Note: Two dots (..) indicate that data are not available or are not reported separately.

[a] This is a compilation from summary presentations in the meeting; it is not a comprehensive account of donor programmes.

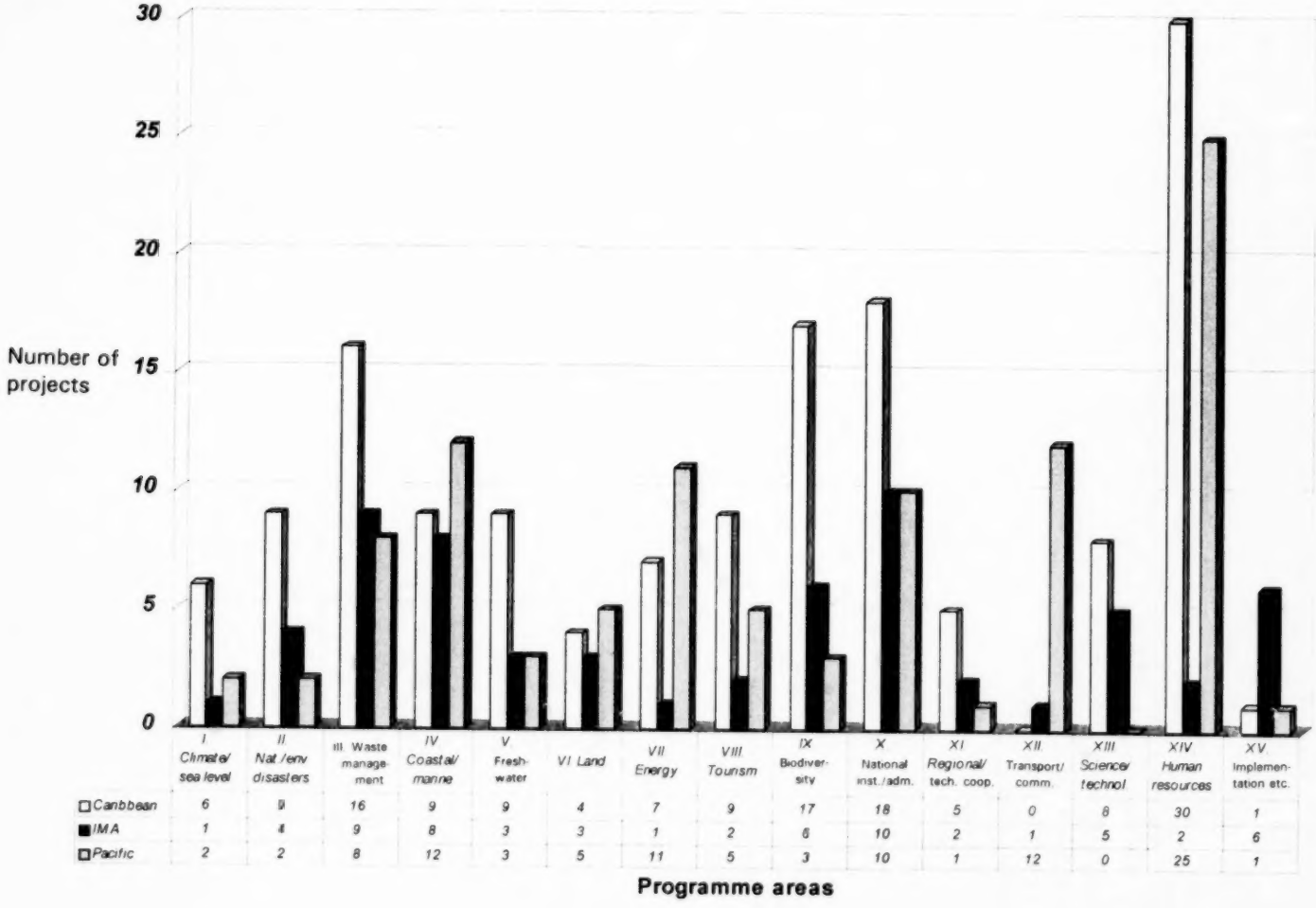
Annex IV

Number of project proposals (regional, national and total), by programme area and group of small island developing States

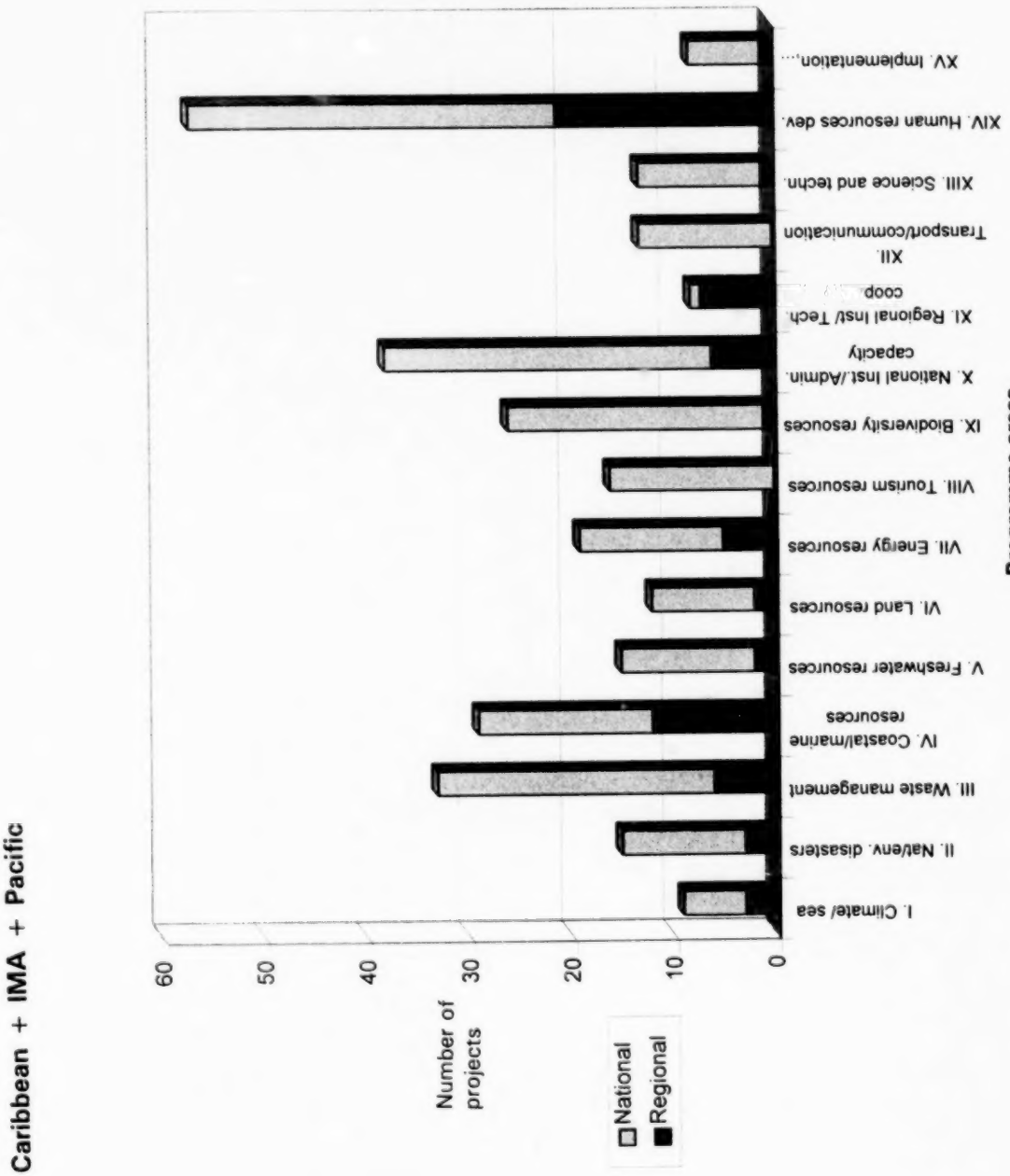
Programme area		Caribbean			IMA[a]			Pacific			Total		
		Reg.	Nat.	Total	Reg.	Nat.	Total	Reg.	Nat.	Total	Reg.	Nat.	Total
I.	Climate change and sea level rise	1	5	6	1	0	1	1	1	2	3	6	9
II.	Natural and environmental disasters	2	7	9	0	4	4	1	1	2	3	12	15
III.	Management of wastes	4	12	16	2	7	9	0	8	8	6	27	33
IV.	Coastal and marine resources	0	9	9	1	7	8	11	1	12	12	17	29
V.	Freshwater resources	1	8	9	0	3	3	1	2	3	2	13	15
VI.	Land resources	1	3	4	0	3	3	1	4	5	2	10	12
VII.	Energy resources	5	2	7	0	1	1	0	11	11	5	14	19
VIII.	Tourism resources	0	9	9	0	2	2	0	5	5	0	16	16
IX.	Biodiversity resources	1	16	17	0	6	6	0	3	3	1	25	26
X.	National institutions and administrative capacity	4	14	18	2	8	10	0	10	10	6	32	38
XI.	Regional institutions and technical cooperation	5	0	5	1	1	2	1	0	1	7	1	8
XII.	Transport and communication	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	12	12	0	13	13
XIII.	Science and technology	1	7	8	0	5	5	0	0	0	1	12	13
XIV.	Human resources development	18	12	30	0	2	2	3	22	25	21	36	57
XV.	Implementation, monitoring and review	0	1	1	0	6	6	1	0	1	1	7	8
	Total	**43**	**105**	**148**	**7**	**56**	**63**	**21**	**80**	**101**	**70**	**241**	**311**

[a] Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and Atlantic.

Project proposals, by programme area and region



	I Climate/ sea level	II Nat./env. disasters	III Waste manage-ment	IV Coastal/ marine	V Fresh-water	VI Land	VII Energy	VIII Tourism	IX Biodiver-sity	X National inst./adm.	XI Regional/ tech. coop.	XII Transport/ comm.	XIII Science/ technol.	XIV Human resources	XV Implemen-tation etc.
Caribbean	6	9	16	9	9	4	7	9	17	18	5	0	8	30	1
IMA	1	4	9	8	3	3	1	2	6	10	2	1	5	2	6
Pacific	2	2	8	12	3	5	11	5	3	10	1	12	0	25	1


Caribbean + IMA + Pacific
Number of projects
0
10
20
30
40
50
60
National
Regional
I. Climate/ sea
II. Nat/env. disasters
III. Waste management
IV. Coastal/marine resources
V. Freshwater resources
VI. Land resources
VII. Energy resources
VIII. Tourism resources
IX. Biodiversity resources
X. National Inst./Admin. capacity
XI. Regional Inst/ Tech. coop
XII. Transport/communication
XIII. Science and techn.
XIV. Human resources dev.
XV. Implementation...
Programme areas

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Agenda item 9
Other matters

Letter dated 27 April 1999 from the Chargé d'Affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to forward (see annex) the appeal of Jagos Zelenovic, Federal Minister for Development, Science and Environment of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, to stop the aggression of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, made on the occasion of 22 April, the International Day of Planet Earth.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the seventh session of the Commission on Sustainable Development under agenda item 9.

(*Signed*) Vladislav **Jovanovic**
Chargé d'Affaires a.i.

99-12119 (E) 280499

Annex

A P P E A L

TO STOP THE AGGRESSION OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION AGAINST THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF YUGOSLAVIA ON THE OCCASION OF 22 APRIL THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PLANET EARTH

Since 24 March 1999 the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has been savagely bombing the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia without any international legal basis and any reason at all.

On the occasion of 22 April, the International Day of Planet Earth, we let it be known to you and to all progressive people all over the world that, in addition to unforeseen human losses and destruction, the weeks-long aggression of NATO has already caused an ecological catastrophe, threatening the life of millions of citizens of Yugoslavia, neighbouring countries and Europe.

The bombing is affecting primarily the most vulnerable population groups: infants, children, the sick and the elderly, disabled and unemployed people. The exhaustion, malnutrition and pauperization of the population has also genetic consequences for future generations, even those that have not been born yet. The daily raids and vast destruction have accounted for the ever greater suffering of the population and the number of ailing people.

Since the very first day of the aggression, NATO has targeted all types of civilian institutions: hospitals, schools, faculties, private houses and apartment and administrative buildings, places of worship, cultural and artistic centres, bridges, roads, railroads, mines, power and industrial plants, hotels, sports arenas and recreational grounds. The damage done to civilian facilities is much larger that the damage done to military ones.

National parks at Mt. Kopaonik, Mt. Tara and Mt. Durmitor, natural reservations, cultural monuments and objects of natural and cultural heritage and protected flora and fauna have not been saved from daily bombings, either. No exception has been made even for objects listed as items of world cultural and natural heritage or world biospheric reservations, as well as wetlands of international significance.

In addition to genocide, the NATO aggression is guilty of eco-cide against the environment in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, in the Balkans and a significant part of Europe. A true ecological catastrophe is taking place in the heart of Europe of unforeseeable temporal or spacial proportions.

Daily bombings of chemical, oil and pharmaceutical

plants by the NATO aggressor in the immediate vicinity of large cities, such as two-million Belgrade, Novi Sad, Pristina, Pancevo, Subotica, Smederevo, Cacak, Krusevac, has released vast quantities of dangerous poisonous substances threatening people, the air, land and all living beings. Dangerous eco-toxicological and toxicological substances (vinylchloridemonomer, chlorine, choric oxides, ammonia, nitric oxides, products of the combustion of oil and oil derivatives and other products of secondary and uncontrolled chemical reactions) have caused the loss of human lives, destroyed or threatened numerous sensitive and rare habitats, polluted freshwater water courses and subterranean waters, while atmospheric pollutants have spread to vast areas and caused a long-term pollution of land and threatened farm and woodland, jeopardizing bio-diversity in an unforeseeable way.

Thousands of citizens of Yugoslavia requested medical assistance in the past days because of the poisoning by poisonous gases released in the bombing of chemical plants in Yugoslavia. This is yet another illustration of the crime against humanity committed by the NATO aggressors. Numerous dangerous consequences are being studied.

The bombing of the NATO aggressor has caused oil spillovers in the Danube (an oil spill 15 km long and 400 m wide), destroying the flora and fauna of the most important European river and threatening the water supply of a large number of people and a number of countries, including the Black Sea.

Exceptionally dangerous are chemical compounds created immediately after bomb and missile explosions and in the fires that burn during the destruction of buildings and woodlands in their environment. Bearing in mind that the NATO aggressor uses also inflammable cluster bombs, vast areas are threatened.

Particularly dangerous is the fact that,in the last days, the NATO aggressors began to fly the A-10 type of aircraft which use depleted uranium ammunition and missiles (banned genocidal weapons affecting all sides in a conflict). According to the results of tests carried out by the British laboratory "Coghill" and the analyses of health organizations carried out after their use in the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, it has been established that they cause an intensive growth of malignant diseases and leukemia ("Gulf syndrome", leukemia) and anomalie with newly-born babies.

The NATO aggressor does not comply with the basic provisions of international law, such as the Charter of the United Nations, the Convention on the Protection of Cultural Assets in Case of Armed Conflict, Convention on the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage etc. The principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment

and Development, adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992, have been trampled upon, in particular principle 24 which reads: "Warfare is inherently destructive of sustainable development. States shall therefore respect international law providing protection for the environment in times of armed conflict and cooperate in its further development, as necessary." and principle 25 which reads: "Peace, development and environment protection are interdependent and indivisible."

Bearing in mind the afore-mentioned and mindful of the consistent policy of peace pursued by the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, I call on you that, in accordance with your authority, you urgently take all necessary measures in order to bring about an immediate aggression of NATO and prevent even graver ecological consequences in a broader region of Europe and the Mediterranean. I also call on you to advise other countries participating in the celebration of the World Day of Planet Earth of the contents of this letter.

Prof. Dr. Jagos Zelenovic
FEDERAL MINISTER FOR DEVELOPMENT,
SCIENCE AND ENVIRONMENT